

A
Christian Library:

CONSISTING OF
EXTRACTS from and ABRIDGMENTS of
THE
CHOICEST PIECES
OF
Practical Divinity,
Which have been publish'd in the
ENGLISH TONGUE.

IN FIFTY VOLUMES.

By JOHN WESLEY, M. A.
Late FELLOW of *Lincoln-College*, OXFORD.

VOL. XVII.

BRISTOL:
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M.DCCCLII.

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in English Tongue

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In Fifth Volume

By JOHN WESTERMAN

late Fellow of Jesus College, Oxford

VOL. XVII

LONDON

Printed by P. G. B. B. B.

THE
Life of Christ

THE
PITH and KERNEL
OF ALL
RELIGION:
A SERMON

Preached before the Honourable

HOUSE of COMMONS,

At WESTMINSTER, *March* 31, 1647.

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By R. CUDWORTH, B. D.

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Life of Philip

PITH and KERNEL



RE

A SERMON

Preached before the Honorable

HOUSE OF COMMONS

At Westminster, March 21. 1647.

By R. CUDWORTH, M.D.

LONDON: Printed by I. B. at the Black-Swan in St. Dunstons Church-yard, 1647.



To the HONOURABLE

HOUSE of COMMONS.

THE Scope of this SERMON, which not long since exercised your Patience, Worthy SENATORS, was not to contend for this or that Opinion; but only to persuade Men to the Life of *Christ*, as the Pith and Kernel of all RELIGION. Without which, I may boldly say, all the several Forms of Religion in the World, though we please ourselves never so much in them, are but so many several Dreams. And those many Opinions about Religion, that are every where so eagerly contended for, where this doth not lie at the Bottom, are but so many Shadows fighting with one another: Wherefore I could not think any Thing else, either more necessary for Christians in general, or more seasonable at this Time, than to stir them up to the real Establishment of the Righteousness of God in their Hearts, and that Participation of the Divine Nature, which the Apostle speaketh of. That so they might not content themselves with mere Conceits of *Christ*, without the Spirit of *Christ* really dwelling in them, and *Christ*

Himself inwardly formed in their Hearts. Nor satisfy themselves with the mere holding of right and orthodox Opinions, whilst they are utterly devoid of that Divine Life, which *Christ* came to kindle in Mens Souls; and therefore are so apt to spend all their Zeal upon a violent obtruding their own Opinions upon others: Which, besides its Repugnancy to the Doctrine and Example of *Christ*, is like to be the Bellows, that will blow a perpetual Fire of Discord in Christian Common-wealths; whilst, in the mean Time, these hungry and starved Opinions devour all the Life and Substance of Religion, as the lean Kine in *Pharaoh's* Dream did eat up the Fat. Nor, lastly, please themselves only in the violent opposing of other Mens Superstitions, without substituting in the Room of them an inward Principle of Spirit and Life in their own Souls. For I fear many of us, that pull down Idols in Churches, may set them up in our Hearts; and whilst we quarrel with painted Glass, make no Scruple at all of entertaining many foul Lusts in our Souls, and committing continual Idolatry with them.

THIS, in general, was the Design of this following Discourse, which you were pleased, noble SENATORS, not only to express your good Acceptance of, but also to give a real Signification of your great undeserved Favour to the Author of it. Who therefore

fore cannot but, as the least Expression of his Thankfulness, humbly devote it to You; presenting it here again to your Eye in the same Form, in which it was delivered to your Ear. Desirous of Nothing more, than that it may be some Way useful to you, to kindle in you the Life and Heat of that, which is endeavoured here to be described upon Paper, that you may express it, both in your private Conversations, and likewise in your publick Employments for the Commonwealth.

I HAVE but one Word more, if you please to give me Leave; That after your Care for the Advancement of Religion, and the publick Good of the Commonwealth, you would think it worthy of you to promote ingenuous Learning, and cast a favourable Influence upon it. I mean not that only which furnisheth the Pulpit, which you seem to be very regardful of; but that, which is more remote from such popular Use, in several Kinds of it, which yet are all of them both very subservient to Religion, and useful to the Commonwealth. There is indeed a *ψευδοπαίδεια*, as the Philosopher tells us, a *bastardly Kind of Literature*, and a *ψευδώνυμος γνώσις*, as the Apostle instructeth us, a *Knowledge falsely so called*; which deserve not to be pleaded for. But the Improvement of our Understanding in the true Contemplation of the Wisdom, Goodness,

Goodness, and other Attributes of GOD, in this great Fabrick of the Universe, cannot easily be disparaged, without a Blemish cast upon the Maker of it. Doubtless, we may as well enjoy that, which GOD hath communicated of Himself to the Creatures, by this larger Faculty of our Understandings, as by those narrow Faculties of our Senses; and yet No-body counts it unlawful to hear a Lesson played upon the Lute, or to smell at a Rose. And these raised Improvements of our natural Understandings may be as well subservient to a Divine Light in our Minds, as the natural Use of these outward Creatures to the Life of GOD in our Hearts. Nay, all true Knowledge doth of itself tend to GOD, who is the Fountain of it, and would ever be raising of our Souls up upon its Wings thither, did not we *κατέχειν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ*, detain it, and hold it down, in Unrighteousness, as the Apostle speaketh. All Philosophy to a wise Man, to a truly sanctified Mind, as he in *Plutarch* speaketh, is but *Matter for Divinity to work upon*. Religion is the Queen of all those Endowments of the Soul; and all pure natural Knowledge, all Virgin and undeflower'd Arts and Sciences, are her Hand-maids, that rise up, and call her Blessed. I need not tell you, how much even the Skill of Languages conduceth to the right Understanding of the Letter of Sacred Writings, on which the spiritual Notions must be built; for none
can

can possibly be ignorant of that, which have but once heard of a Translation of the Bible. The Apostle exhorteth private Christians to *Whatsoever Things are lovely, whatsoever Things are of good Report, if there be any Virtue, if there be any Praise, to think on those Things:* And therefore it may well become you, noble GENTLEMEN, in your publick Sphere, to encourage so noble a Thing as Knowledge is, which will reflect so much Lustre back upon yourselves. That God would direct you in all your Councils, and still bless you, and prosper you in all your sincere Endeavours for the publick Good, is the hearty Prayer of,

Your most humble Servant,

RALPH CUDWORTH.

Dei Mercurii ultimo Martii, 1647.

ORDERED by the Commons assembled in Parliament: That Sir HENRY MILD MAY, do from this House give Thanks unto Mr. CUDWORTH, for the great Pains he took, in the SERMON he preached on this Day at Margarets Westminster, before the House of Commons, (it being a Day of Publick Humiliation) and that he do desire him to print his SERMON.

H. ELSYNG, Cler. Parl. D. Com.

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 The Apostle exhorted private Christians to
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 to give an account of their faith to every man
 that shall demand of them. It is not only
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Your most humble Servant,

RALPH CUDWORTH.

Printed by the Common-Printers in Westminster:
 For the Hon^{ble} Henry Manners, at the Sign of the
 Gun, in the Strand, near the Temple Church.
 Printed by W. Stansfield, at the Sign of the
 Gun, in the Strand, near the Temple Church.
 1684.

In Answer to the
 Speech of the
 Hon^{ble} Henry Manners,
 in the House of
 Commons, April
 1684.



I JOHN ii. 3, 4.

And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep his Commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a Liar, and the Truth is not in him.

WE have much Enquiry concerning Knowledge in these latter Times. The Sons of Adam are now as busy as ever himself was, about the *Tree of Knowledge*, of Good and Evil, shaking the Boughs of it, and Scrambling for the Fruit: Whilst, I fear, many are too unmindful of the *Tree of Life*. And though there be now no Cherubims with their flaming Swords, to fright Men off from it; yet the Way that leads to it seems to be solitary and untrodden, as if there were but few that had any Mind to Taste of the Fruit of it. There be many, that speak of new Discoveries of Truth, of Dawnings of Gospel-light; and no Question, but God hath reserved much of this for the very Evening and Sun-set of the World, for *in the latter Days Knowledge shall be encreased*: But yet I wish whilst we talk of Light, and dispute about Truth, we could walk more as *Children of the Light*. Whereas if St. *John's* Rule be good here in the Text, that no Man truly knows *Christ*, but he that keepeth his Commandments; it is much to be suspected, many of us, which pretend to Light, have a thick and gloomy Darkness over-spreading our Souls.

Souls. There be now many large Volumes and Discourses written concerning *Christ*, Thousands of Controversies discussed; so that our bookish *Christians*, that have all their Religion in Writings and Papers, think they are now compleatly furnished with all Kind of Knowledge concerning *Christ*; and when they see all their Leaves lying about them, they think they cannot possibly miss of the Way to Heaven; as if Religion were nothing but a little *Book-craft*, a mere *Paper-skill*. But if St. *John's* Rule here be good, we must not judge of our knowing of *Christ*, by our Skill in Books and Papers, but by our keeping his Commandments. And that I fear will discover many of us (notwithstanding all this Light which we boast of round us) to have nothing but *Egyptian* Darkness within upon our Hearts. The Vulgar think they know *Christ* enough, out of their Creeds and Catechisms; and if they have but a little acquainted themselves with these, and like Parrots conned the Words of them, they doubt not but they are sufficiently instructed in the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. Many of the more Learned, if they can but Wrangle and Dispute about *Christ*, imagine themselves to be grown great Proficients in the School of *Christ*. The greatest Part of the World, whether learned or unlearned, think, that there is no Need of Purging and Purifying their Hearts, for the right Knowledge of *Christ* and his Gospel; but though their Lives be never so wicked, their Hearts never so foul within, yet they may know *Christ* sufficiently out of their Treatises and Discourses, out of their mere Systems and Bodies of Divinity; which I deny not to be Useful in a subordinate Way: Although our Saviour prescribed his Disciples another Method, to come to the right Knowledge of Divine Truths, by Doing of God's Will; *he that will do my Father's Will* (saith He) *shall know of the Doctrine*

trine whether it be of GOD. He is a true *Christian* indeed, not that is only *Book-Taught*, but that is *GOD-Taught*; he that hath an *Unction* from the *holy One* that teacheth him all Things; he that hath the Spirit of *Christ* within him, that *searcheth* out the deep Things of GOD: For as no Man knoweth the Things of a Man, save the Spirit of Man which is in him, even so the Things of GOD knoweth no Man but the Spirit of GOD. Ink and Paper can never make us *Christians*, can never beget a new Nature in us; can never form *Christ*, or any true Notions of spiritual Things in our Hearts. The Gospel, that new Law which *Christ* delivered to the World, it is not merely a *Letter* without us, but a *quicken- ing Spirit* within us. Cold Theorems and Maxims, dry Disputes and Reasonings, could never yet of themselves beget the least Glimpse of true heavenly Light, the least Sap of saving Knowledge in any Heart. All this is but the Groping of the poor dark Spirit of Man after Truth, to find it out with his own Endeavours, and feel it with his own cold and benumbed Hands. Words and Syllables which are but dead Things, cannot possibly convey the living Notions of heavenly Truths to us. The secret My- steries of a divine Life, of a new Nature, of *Christ* formed in our Hearts; cannot be written or spoken, Language cannot reach them; neither can they e- ver be truly understood, except the Soul itself be kindled from within, and awakened into the Life of them. A Painter that would draw a Rose, tho' he may flourish some Likeness of it in Figure and Colour, yet he can never paint the Fragancy; or if he would draw a Flame, he cannot put a constant Heat into his Colours; he cannot make his Pencil drop a Sound, as the Echo in the Epigram mocks at him—*Si vis similem pingere, pinge sonum*. All the Skill of cunning Artizans and Mechanicks, can- not put a Principle of Life into a Statue of their

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own making. Neither are we able to enclose in Words and Letters, the Life, Soul, and Essence of any spiritual Truths; and as it were to incorporate it in them. Some Philosophers have determined, that *ἀρετή* is not *διδασκόν*, Virtue cannot be Taught by any certain Rules or Precepts. Men and Books may propound some Directions to us, that may set us in such a Way of Life and Practice, as in which we shall at last find it within ourselves, and be experimentally acquainted with it: But they cannot Teach it us like a mechanick Art or Trade. No surely, *there is a Spirit in Man; and the Inspiration of the Almighty giveth this Understanding.* But we shall not meet with this Spirit any where, but in the Way of Obedience; the Knowledge of *Christ*, and the Keeping of his Commandments, must always go together, and be mutual Causes of one another.

Hereby we know that we know Him, if we keep his Commandments.

He that sayeth, I know Him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a Liar, and the Truth is not in him.

I COME now unto these Words themselves, I shall not need to force out any Thing from them; I shall only take Notice of some few Observations, which drop from them of their own Accord, and then conclude with some Application of them to ourselves.

FIRST then, If this be the right Method of discovering our Knowledge of *Christ*, by our keeping of his Commandments; then we may safely draw Conclusions concerning our State and Condition, from the Conformity of our Lives to the Will of *Christ*. Would

we

we know whether we know *Christ* aright, let us consider whether the Life of *Christ* be in us: He that hath not the Life of *Christ* in him, hath nothing but the Name of *Christ*, not the Substance. He that builds his House upon this Foundation; not an airy Notion of *Christ* swimming in his Brain, but *Christ* dwelling and living in his Heart; as our Saviour Himself witnesseth, *buildeth his House upon a Rock*; and when Floods come, and Winds blow, and the Rain descends, and beats upon it, it shall stand Impregnable. But he that builds all his Comfort upon an ungrounded Persuasion, that God from all Eternity hath loved him; and seeketh not for God really dwelling in his Soul; he builds his House upon a Quicksand, and it shall suddenly sink and be swallowed up: *His Hope shall be cut off, and his Trust shall be a Spider's Web; he shall lean upon his House, but it shall not stand, he shall hold it fast but it shall not endure.* We are no where commanded to pry into these Secrets, but the Advice given us, is, to *make our Calling and Election sure.* We have no Warrant in Scripture, to peep into these hidden Rolls of Eternity, and to make it our first Thing that we do when we come to *Christ*, to persuade ourselves that we are elected to everlasting Happiness; before we see the *Image of God*, in Righteousness and true Holiness, shaped in our Hearts. God's everlasting Decree, is too dazzling an Object for us at first to set our Eyes upon: It is far easier and safer for us to look upon the Rays of his Goodness and Holiness, as they are reflected in our own Hearts; and there to read the mild and gentle Characters of God's Love to us, in our Love to Him, and our hearty Compliance with his heavenly Will: As it is safer for us if we would see the Sun, to look upon it here below in a Pail of Water; then to cast up our daring Eyes upon the Body of the Sun itself, which is too Radiant

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and Scorching for us. Those divine Purposes, whatsoever they be, are altogether unsearchable by us; they lie wrapt in everlasting Darkness, and covered in a deep Abyss; who is able to Fathom the Bottom of them? Let us not therefore make this our first Attempt towards GOD and Religion, to persuade ourselves strongly of these everlasting Decrees: For if at our first Flight we aim so high, we shall haply but scorch our Wings, and be struck back with Lightning, as those *Giants* of old were, that would needs attempt to invade Heaven. The Way to obtain a full Assurance of our Title to Heaven, is not to Clamber up to it, by a Ladder of our own ungrounded Persuasions; but to dig as low as Hell by Humility in our Hearts. We must *ἀναβαίνειν κάτω* and *κατωβαίνειν ἄνω*, as the Greek Epigram speaks, *ascend downward, and descend upward*; if we would indeed come to Heaven. The most triumphant Confidence of a *Christian*, riseth safely and surely upon this low Foundation, that lies deep under Ground; and there stands firmly and steadfastly. When our Heart is once tuned into a Conformity with the Word of GOD, when we feel our Will, perfectly to concur with his Will, we shall then presently perceive a *Spirit of Adoption* within ourselves, teaching us to cry *Abba, Father*. We shall not then care for peeping into those hidden Records of Eternity, to see whether our Names be written there: No, we shall find a Copy of GOD's Thoughts concerning us, written in our own Breasts. There we may read the Characters of his Favour to us; there we may feel an inward Sense of his Love to us, flowing out of our hearty and unfained Love to Him. And we shall be more undoubtedly persuaded of it, than if any of those winged *Watchmen* above, that are privy to Heaven's Secrets, should come to tell us; that they saw our Names enrolled in those *Volumes of Eternity*.
Whereas

Whereas on the Contrary ; though we strive to persuade ourselves never so confidently, that GOD from all Eternity hath elected us to Life and Happiness; if we do yet, in the mean Time, entertain any Iniquity within our Hearts, and willingly close with any Lust ; do what we can, we shall find many a cold Qualm every now and then seizing upon us. The least inward Lust willingly continued in, will be like a *Worm*, fretting the *Gourd* of our Confidence, and presumptuous Persuasion of GOD's Love, and always gnawing at the Root of it ; and though we strive to keep it alive, and continually besprinkle it with some Dews of our own ; yet it will always be dying and withering in our Bosoms. But a good Conscience within, will be better to a *Christian*, then *Health to his Navel, and Marrow to his Bones* ; it will be an everlasting Cordial to his Heart ; it will be softer to him than a Bed of Down, and he may sleep securely upon it, in the Midst of raging and tempestuous Seas ; when the Winds bluster, and the Waves beat round about him. A good Conscience, is the best Looking Glass of Heaven ; in which the Soul may see GOD's Thoughts and Purposes concerning it, as so many shining Stars reflected to it. *Hereby we know that we know Christ, hereby we know that Christ loves us, if we keep his Commandments.*

SECONDLY, If hereby we know that we know *Christ*, by our keeping his Commandments ; then the Knowledge of *Christ* does not consist in a few barren Notions, in certain dry and sapless Opinions. *Christ* came not into the World to fill our Heads with Speculations ; to kindle a Fire of Wrangling amongst us ; and to warm our Spirits against one another with angry and peevish Debates, whilst in the mean Time our Hearts remain all Ice towards GOD, and have not the least Spark of true heavenly

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Fire to melt them. *Christ* came not to possess our Brains only with some cold Opinions, that send down nothing but a freezing and benumbing Influence upon our Hearts. He is the best *Christian* whose Heart beats with the truest Pulse towards Heaven; —not he whose Head spinneth out the finest Cobwebs. Surely the Way to Heaven that *Christ* hath taught us, is plain and easy, if we have but honest Hearts: We need not many Criticisms, many School-Distinctions, to come to the right Understanding of it. No Man shall ever be kept out of Heaven, for not comprehending Mysteries that were beyond the Reach of his shallow Understanding; if he had but an honest and good Heart, that was ready to comply with *Christ's* Commandments. *Say not in thine Heart, who shall ascend into Heaven?* That is with high Speculations to bring down *Christ* from thence: Or, *who shall descend into the Abyss beneath?* That is with deep searching Thoughts to fetch up *Christ* from thence: But lo! *the Word is nigh thee, even in thy Mouth, and in thy Heart.* But I wish it were not the Distemper of our Times, to make Men solicitous about this and that Opinion; whilst in the mean Time there is no Care taken about *keeping Christ's* Commandments, and being renewed in our Minds according to the Image of God, in Righteousness and true Holiness. We say, *lo, here is Christ,* and *lo, there is Christ,* in these and these Opinions; whereas in Truth, *Christ* is neither here, nor there, nor any where; but where the Spirit of *Christ*, where the Life of *Christ* is. Do we not now a-Days open and lock up Heaven, with the private Key of this and that Opinion of our own? And if any one serve God, with Faith and a pure Conscience, that yet skills not of some contended for Opinions; he hath not the *Shibboleth*, he hath not the true Watch-word; he must not pass the Guards
into

into Heaven. Whereas every true *Christian* finds the least Dram of hearty Affection towards GOD, to be more cordial and sovereign to his Soul, than all the *speculative Notions* and *Opinions* in the World. And though he study also to inform his Understanding aright, and free his Mind from all Error; yet it is nothing but the Life of *Christ* deeply rooted in his Heart, which is the Elixir that he feeds upon. Had he all Faith that he could remove Mountains, (as St. Paul speaks) had he all Knowledges, all Tongues and Languages; yet He priseteth one Dram of Love beyond them all. He accounteth him that feeds upon mere *Notions* in Religion, to be but an airy and Camellion-like *Christian*. He findeth himself now otherwise rooted and centered in GOD, than when he did before meerly contemplate and gaze upon him: He tasteth and relisheth GOD within himself, he hath a *Savour of Him*; whereas before he did but rove and guess at random at Him. He feeleth himself safely anchored in GOD, and will not be dissuaded from it; though perhaps he skill not many of those *Subtilties*, which others make the Alpha and Omega of their Religion. It waswell spoken by a noble Philosopher, *Without Virtue GOD is an empty Name*: so without Obedience to *Christ's* Commandments, without the *Life of Christ* dwelleth in us, whatsoever *Opidions* we entertain of Him, *Christ* is only named by us, He is not *known*. I speak not here against a free and ingenuous Enquiry into all Truth, according to our several Abilities and Opportunities; I plead not for the enthralling our Judgments to the Dictates of Men, I do not disparage the natural Improvement of our Understanding by true Knowledge: But the Thing I aim against is, the dispiriting the Life and Vigour of our Religion, by dry Speculations, and making it nothing but a mere dead Skeleton of *Opinions*, a few dry Bones without any Flesh and Sinews tyed up

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up together: And misplacing all our Zeal upon these, which should be spent to better Purpose upon other Objects. Knowledge indeed is a Thing far more excellent than Riches, outward Pleasures, worldly Dignities, or any Thing else besides Holiness: but yet our Happiness consisteth not in it, but in a divine Temper and Constitution of Soul which is far above it. But it is a Piece of that Corruption that runneth through human Nature, that we naturally prize Knowledge more than Holiness. We think it a gallant Thing to be fluttering up to Heaven with our Wings of Knowledge and Speculation: Whereas the highest Mystery of a divine Life here, and of perfect Happiness hereafter, consisteth in nothing but mere Obedience to the Divine Will. Happiness is nothing but that inward sweet Delight, that will arise from the harmonious Agreement between our Wills and God's Will. There is nothing contrary to God in the whole World, nothing that fights against Him but *Self-will*. This is the strong Castle, that we all keep garrison'd against Heaven in every one of our Hearts, which God continually layeth Siege unto: And it must be conquered and demolished, before we can conquer Heaven. It was by this *Self-will*, that *Adam* fell in Paradise; that those glorious Angels, those *Morning-Stars*, kept not their first Station, but dropt down from Heaven like falling Stars, and sunk into this Condition of Bitterness, Anxiety, and Wretchedness. They all intangled themselves with the Length of their own Wings, they would needs Will otherwise than God would Will in them: And going about to make their Wills wider; the more they strugled, they found themselves the faster pinioned; in so much that now they are not able to use any Wings at all, but inheriting the *Serpents* Curse, can only creep with their *Bellies* upon the Earth. Now our
only

only Way to recover GOD and Happiness again, is not to soar up with our Understandings, but to destroy this *Self-will* of ours: And then we shall find our Wings to grow again, our Plumes fairly spread, and ourselves raised aloft into the free Air of perfect Liberty, which is perfect Happiness. There is nothing in the whole World able to do us Good or Hurt, but GOD and our own Will; neither Riches nor Poverty, nor Disgrace nor Honour, nor Life nor Death, nor Angels nor Devils; but willing or not willing as we ought to do. Should Hell itself cast all its fiery Darts against us, if our *Will* be right, if it be informed by the divine Will; they can do us no Hurt; we have then, (if I may so speak) an enchanted Shield that is impenetrable, and will bear off all. GOD will not hurt us, and Hell cannot hurt us, if we will nothing but what GOD wills. Nay, then we are acted by GOD Himself, and the whole Divinity floweth in upon us; and when we have cashiered this *Self-will*, which did but shackle and confine our Souls, our Wills shall then become truly free, being widened and enlarged to the extent of God's own Will. *Hereby we know that we know* Christ indeed, not by our *speculative Opinions* concerning Him, but by our keeping his Commandments.

THIRDLY, If hereby we are to judge whether we truly *know* Christ, by our *keeping his Commandments*; so that *he that saith he knoweth Him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a Liar*; then, *this was not the Design of the Gospel, to give the World an Indulgence to Sin, upon what Pretence soever*. Though we are too prone to make such Misconstructions of it; as if GOD had intended nothing else in it, but to *dandle* our corrupt Nature, and contrive a smooth and easy Way for us to come to Happiness, without the toilsome Labour of subduing

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duing our sinful Affections. Or, as if the Gospel were nothing else but a Declaration to the World, of GOD's engaging his Affections from all Eternity, on some particular Persons, in such a Manner, that He would resolve to love them, though He never made them Partakers of his Holiness, and tho' they should remain under the Power of their Lusts, yet they should still continue his *beloved Ones*, and He would notwithstanding, at last bring them undoubtedly to Heaven. Which is nothing else, but to make the GOD that we worship, an *Acceptor of Persons*; and one that should encourage that in the World which is diametrically opposite to GOD's own Life and Being. And indeed nothing is more ordinary, than for us to shape out such monstrous Notions of GOD unto ourselves, by looking upon Him through the *coloured Medium* of our own corrupt Hearts, and having the *Eye* of our Soul *tinctured* by our own Lusts. And therefore, because we Mortals can *fondly* Love and Hate, and sometimes, hug the very Vices of those to whom our Affections are engaged; we are so ready to shape out a Deity like ourselves, and to fashion out such a GOD, as will in *Christ* at least, hug the very Wickedness of the World: And in those that be once his own, by I know not what, *fond* Affection, appropriated to himself, connive at their very Sins, so that they shall not make the least Breach betwixt Himself and them. Truly, I know not whether of the two, be the worse Idolatry, for a Man to make a GOD out of a *Piece of Wood*, and *fall down unto it and worship it, and say, deliver me, for thou art my GOD*; or to set up such an Idol-GOD of our own Imaginations, fashioned according to the Similitude of our own *Fondness* and Wickedness: And when we should paint out GOD with the liveliest Colours, that we can possibly borrow from any created Being; to draw Him out thus with the blackest Coal of our own corrupt Hearts; and to make the very Blots and Blurs of our own Souls,

to be the Letters, which we spell out his Name by. But there is no such GOD as this any where in the World, but only in some Mens false Imaginations, who know not all this while, that they look upon themselves instead of GOD, and make an Idol of Themselves, which they worship and adore for Him; being so full of themselves, that whatsoever they see round about them, even GOD Himself they colour with their own Tincture. And therefore it is no Wonder if Men seem more devoutly affected toward such an imaginary God, than to the true GOD, clothed with his own proper Attributes; since it is nothing but an Image of Themselves, which *Narcissus-like* they fall in Love with: No Wonder if they kiss and dandle such a *Baby* as this, which, like little Children, they have dressed up according to their own Likeness. But GOD will ever *dwell* in spotless Light, howsoever we paint and disfigure Him here below: He will still be circled about, with his own Rays of unstained and immaculate Glory. And tho' the Gospel be not GOD, as He is in his own *Brightness*, but GOD *veiled* to us, GOD in a State of Humiliation, as the Sun in a Rain-Bow; yet it is nothing else but a clear and unspotted Mirror of divine Holiness, Goodness, Purity; in which Attributes lies the very Life and Essence of GOD Himself. The Gospel is nothing else but GOD descending into the World in *our Form*, and conversing with us in our Likeness; that he might allure and draw us up to GOD, and make us Partakers of his *divine Form*, as *Athanasius* speaks, *GOD was made Man, that he might deify us*, that is, (as *St. Peter* expresseth it) *make us Partakers of the Divine Nature*. Now, I say, the proper Character, and essential Tincture of GOD Himself, is nothing else but *Goodness*. Nay, I may be bold to add, that GOD is therefore GOD, because He is the highest and most perfect Good: And Good is not therefore good, because

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cause GOD out of an arbitrary Will of his, would have it so. Whatsoever GOD doth in the World, He doth it as it is suitable to the highest Goodness; the first Idea, and fairest Copy of which is his own Essence. Virtue and Holiness in Creatures, as *Plato* well discourseth, are not *therefore Good, because GOD loveth them*, and will have them be accounted such; but rather, *GOD therefore loveth them because they are in themselves simply Good*. It is another Mistake, which sometimes we have of GOD, by shaping Him according to the Model of ourselves, when we make Him nothing but a *blind, dark, impetuous Self-will*, running through the World; such as we ourselves are furiously acted with, that have not the Ballast of *absolute Goodness* to poise and settle us. That I may therefore come nearer to the Thing in Hand: GOD, who is *absolute Goodness*, cannot Love any of his Creatures and take Pleasure in them, without bestowing a Communication of his Goodness upon them. GOD cannot make a Gospel, to promise Men Life and Happiness hereafter, without being *regenerated*, and made Partakers of his *Holiness*. As soon may Heaven and Hell, be reconciled together, and lovingly shake Hands with one another; as GOD can be fondly indulgent to any Sin, in whomsoever it be. As soon may Light and Darkness be espoused together, and Mid-Night be married to the Noon-Day; as GOD can be joined in a League of Friendship, to any wicked Soul.

THE great Design of GOD in the Gospel, is to clear up this Mist of Sin and Corruption, which we are here surrounded with: And to bring up his Creatures, out of the *Shadow of Death*, to the *Region of Light* above, the Land of Truth and Holiness. The great Mystery of the Gospel is to establish a *God-like Frame and Disposition of Spirit*,
which

which consists in Righteousness and true Holiness, in the Hearts of Men. And *Christ*, who is the great and mighty Saviour, came on Purpose into the World; not only to save us from *Fire and Brimstone*, but also to save us from our *Sins*. *Christ* hath therefore made an Expiation of our Sins, by his Death upon the Cross, that we being thus *delivered out of the Hands* of these our greatest *Enemies*, might serve *GOD* without Fear, in Holiness and Righteousness before Him, all the Days of our Life. This Grace of *GOD* that bringeth Salvation, hath therefore appeared to all Men, in the Gospel, that it might teach us to deny Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World; looking for that blessed Hope, and glorious Appearing of the great *GOD*, and our Saviour *Jesus Christ*; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works. These Things I write unto you, saith our *Apostle*, a little before my Text) that you Sin not: Therein expressing the End of the whole Gospel, which is, not only to cover Sin, by spreading the purple Robe of *Christ's* Death and Sufferings over it, whilst it still remaineth in us with all its Filth and Noisomeness, but also, to convey a powerful and mighty Spirit of Holiness, to cleanse us, and free us from it. And this is a greater Grace of *God's* to us, than the former, which still go both together in the Gospel; besides the free Remission and Pardon of Sin in the *Blood* of *Christ*, the delivering us from the Power of Sin, by the *Spirit* of *Christ* dwelling in our Hearts. *Christ* came not into the World only to cast a Mantle over us, and hide all our filthy Sores, from *GOD's* avenging Eye, with his Merits and Righteousness, but He came likewise, to be a Chirurgeon, and Physician of Souls, to free us from the Filth and Corruption of them; which

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is more grievous and burthensom, more noisom to a true *Christian*, than the Guilt of Sin itself: Should a poor wretched and diseased Creature, that is full of Sores and Ulcers, be covered all over with Purple, or cloathed with Scarlet; he would take but little Contentment in it, whilst his Sores, and Wounds, remain'd upon him: And he had much rather be array'd in Rags, so he might obtain but Soundness and Health within. The Gospel is a true *Bethesda*, a *Pool of Grace*, where such poor, lame, and infirm Creatures, as we are, upon the moving of GOD's Spirit in it, may descend, not only to wash our Skin, but to be cured of our Diseases within. And whatever the World thinks, there is a powerful Spirit that *moves* upon these *Waters*, the Waters of the Gospel, for this new Creation, the Regeneration of Souls; the very same Spirit, that once *moved* upon the *Waters* of the Universe at the first Creation, and spreading its mighty Wings over them, did hatch the new-born World into this Perfection: I say, the same *Almighty* Spirit of *Christ*, still worketh in the Gospel, spreading its gentle, healing, quickening Wings, over our Souls. The Gospel, is not like *Abana* and *Pharphar*, those common Rivers of *Damascus*, that could only cleanse the outside; but it is a true *Jordan*, in which such leprous *Naamans*, as we all are, may wash and be clean. *Blessed* indeed are they, whose *Iniquities* are forgiven, and whose *Sins* are covered: *Blessed* is the Man to whom the LORD will not impute Sin: But yet, rather blessed are they, whose Sins are removed like a *Morning Cloud*, and quite taken away from them: *Blessed*, thrice blessed, are they, that hunger and thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be satisfied: *Blessed* are the Pure in Heart for they shall see GOD. Our Saviour *Christ* came (as *John the Baptist* tells us) with a Fan in his Hand, that He might thoroughly purge his Floor and gather his *Wheat*

Wheat into his Garner : But the Chaff he will burn up, with unquenchable Fire. He came (as the Prophet Malachy speaks) like a Refiner's Fire, and like Fullers Soap ; to sit as a Refiner and Purifier of Silver, and to purify all the Sons of Levi, and purge them as Gold and Silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an Offering in Righteousness. Christ came not only to write Holiness to the LORD upon Aaron's Forehead, and to put his Urim and Thummim upon his Breast-Plate, but this is the Covenant, saith the LORD, that I will make with them in those Days ; I will put My Law into their inward Parts, and write it in their Hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my People. GOD sent his own Son (saith St. Paul) in the Likeness of sinful Flesh, and by a Sacrifice for Sin, condemned Sin in the Flesh : That the Righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit. The first Adam, as the Scripture tells us, brought in a real Defilement, which like a noisome Leprosy, hath overspread all Mankind : And therefore the second Adam must not only fill the World with a Conceit of Holiness ; but he must really convey, such an immortal Seed of Grace into the Hearts of true Believers, as may prevail still more and more in them, till it have at last, quite wrought out that Poison of the Serpent. Christ, that was nothing but Divinity dwelling in a Tabernacle of Flesh, and GOD Himself immediately acting a human Nature, came into the World to kindle here that divine Life amongst Men, which is certainly dearer unto GOD, than any Thing else in the World ; and to propagate this celestial Fire, from one Heart to another, until the End of the World. Neither is He, or was He ever absent from this Spark of his Divinity, kindled amongst Men, wheresoever it be, though He seem bodily to be withdrawn from us. He is the standing, constant, inexhausted Fountain.

tain of this Divine Light and Heat; that still toucheth every Soul that is enlivened by it, with an outstretched Ray, and freely lends his Beams, and disperseth his *Influence* to all, from the Beginning of the World to the End of it. *We all receive of his Fulness, Grace for Grace*, as all the Stars in Heaven are said to light their Candles at the Sun's Flame. For though his Body be withdrawn from us, yet by the lively and *virtual Contact* of his Spirit, he is always kindling, cheering, quickning, warming, enlivening our Hearts. Is GOD powerful to kill and to destroy, and is He not powerful to save? Nay, it is the sweetest Flower in all the Garland of his Attributes; it is the richest Diamond in his Crown of Glory, that He is *Mighty to save*: And this is far more magnificent for Him, than to be stiled, *Mighty to destroy*. For that, except it be in the Way of Justice, speaks no Power at all, but mere Impotency, for the Root of all Power is Goodness. Or must we say, that GOD indeed is able to rescue us out of the Power of Sin and Satan, when we sigh and groan towards Him, but yet some Times to exercise his absolute Authority, his uncontrollable Dominion, He delights rather in plunging wretched Souls into infernal Night, and everlasting Darkness? What shall we then make the GOD of the whole World? Nothing but a cruel and dreadful *Erynnis*, with *curled fiery Snakes* about his Head, and *Firebrands* in his Hands, thus governing the World? Surely this will make us either secretly to think, that there is no GOD, if He must be such, or else to wish, there were none. But doubtless, GOD will at last confute all these our *Misapprehensions* of Him, cast the Shame of all our sinful Deficiencies upon ourselves, and vindicate his own Glory. In the mean Time let us know, that the Gospel requireth far more of us, than ever the Law did; for it requireth a *new Creature*, a

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Divine Nature, Christ formed in us: But withal, it bestoweth a *quickning Spirit*, an *enlivening Power*, to enable us, to express that which is required of us. Whosoever therefore truly *knows* Christ, the same also *keepeth* Christ's *Commandments*. But, he that saith, *I know Him*, and *keepeth not his Commandments*, he is a *Liar*, and the *Truth* is not in him.

I HAVE now done with the *First Part* of my Discourse, concerning those *Observations*, which arise naturally from the Words: I shall in the next Place, proceed to make some general *Application* of them, all together.

Now therefore, I beseech you, let us consider, whether or no we know *Christ*: Not by our Acquaintance with *Systems* of Divinity; not by our Skill in *Books* and *Papers*; but by our *keeping of* Christ's *Commandments*. All the Books and Writings which we converse with; can but represent Spiritual Objects to our Understandings; which yet we can never see in their true Figure, Colour, and Proportion, until we have a *Divine Light* within, to irradiate, and shine upon them. Though there be never such excellent Truths concerning *Christ*, and his Gospel, set down in Words and Letters; yet they will be but unknown Characters to us, until we have a *living Spirit* within us, that can decypher them: Until the same Spirit, by secret Whispers in our Hearts, comment upon them, which did at first indite them. There are many that understand the *Greek* and *Hebrew* of the *Scripture*, the original Languages in which the Text was written, that never understood the *Language of the Spirit*. There is a *Flesh* and a *Spirit*, a *Body* and a *Soul*, in all the Writings of the *Scripture*: It is but the *Flesh*, and *Body* of Divine Truths, that is printed upon Paper; which many

Moths of Books and Libraries feed upon; many walking Skeletons of Knowledge, that bury and entomb Truths, in the living Sepulchres of their Souls, do only converse with: Such as never did any else, but pick at the mere Bark and Rind of Truths, and crack the Shells of them. But there is a *Soul*, and *Spirit* of Divine Truths, that could never yet be congealed into Ink, that could never be blotted upon Paper, which by a secret Conveyance, passeth from one Soul unto another; being able to dwell and lodge no where, but in a spiritual Being, in a living Thing; because itself is nothing but *Life* and *Spirit*. Neither can it, where it is, express itself sufficiently in Words and Sounds, but it will best declare and speak itself in Actions: As the old Manner of *Writing* among the *Egyptians* was, not by Words, but Things. The *Life* of Divine Truths, is better expressed in Actions than in Words, because Actions are more *living* Things, than Words; Words are nothing but the dead Resemblances, and Pictures of those Truths, which *live* and *breathe* in Actions: And the *Kingdom of God* (as the Apostle speaketh) *consisteth not in Word*, but in *Life*, and *Power*. Let us not (I beseech you) judge of our *knowing Christ*, by our ungrounded *Persuasions* that *Christ* from all Eternity hath loved us, and given Himself particularly for us, without the real partaking of the Image of *Christ* in our Hearts. The great Mystery of the Gospel doth not lie only in *Christ without us*, (tho' we must know also what He hath done for us) but the very Pith and Kernel of it, consists in *Christ inwardly formed* in our Hearts. Nothing is truly ours, but what lives in our Spirits. *Salvation* itself cannot *save* us, as long as it is only without us; no more than *Health* can cure us, when it is not within us, but somewhere at a Distance from

from us; no more than *Arts and Sciences*, whilst they lie only in Books and Papers without us; can make us learned. The Gospel, though it be a sovereign and medicinal Thing in itself, yet the mere knowing and believing the History of it, will do us no Good: We can receive no Vertue from it, 'till it be inwardly digested in our Souls; 'till it be made *ours*, and become a *living Thing* in our Hearts. The Gospel, if it be only without us, cannot save us; no more than that Physician's Bill, could cure the ignorant Patient of his Disease, who, when it was commended to him, took the Paper only, and put it up in his Pocket, but never drunk the Potion that was prescribed in it. All that *Christ* did for us in the Flesh, from his lying in a *Manger*, when He was born, to his bleeding upon the *Cross*, will not save us from our Sins, unless *Christ* by his Spirit dwell in us. It will not avail us, to believe that He was born of a *Virgin*, unless the *Power of the Most High* overshadow our Hearts, and beget Him there likewise. It will not profit us, to believe that He died upon the *Cross* for us; unless we be *baptized into his Death*, by the Mortification of all our Lusts; unless *the old Man of Sin* be crucified in our Hearts. *Christ* indeed hath made an Expiation for our Sins upon his Cross; and the Blood of *Christ* is the only sovereign Balsam to free us from the Guilt of them: But yet besides the *Sprinkling* of the *Blood* of *Christ* upon us, we must be made Partakers also of his *Spirit*. *Christ* came into the World as well to redeem us from the Power and Bondage of our Sins, as to free us from the Guilt of them. *You know* (saith St. *John*) *that He was manifested, to take away our Sins; whosoever therefore abideth in Him, sinneth not, whosoever sinneth, hath not seen nor known Him,* Lo the End of *Christ's* Coming into the World, Lo a Design worthy of GOD manifested in the

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Flesh. *Christ* did not take all those Pains; to lay aside his Robes of Glory, and come down hither into the World; to enter into a Virgin's Womb; to be born in our Shape, and be laid a poor crying Infant in a Manger; and having no *Form nor Comeliness* at all upon Him, to take upon Him the *Form of a Servant*; to undergo an ignominious Life, and at last to be abandoned to a shameful Death, a Death upon the Cross; I say, He did not do all this, merely to bring in a *Notion* into the World, without producing any real and substantial Effect, without the Changing, Mending, and Reforming the World: So that Men should still be as wicked as they were before, and as much under the Power of the Prince of Darkness; only, they should not be *thought so*: They should still remain as full of all the filthy Sores, of Sin and Corruption as before; only, they should be *accounted whole*. Shall God come down from Heaven, and *Pitch a Tabernacle* amongst Men? Shall He undertake such a huge Design, and make so great a Noise of doing Something, which, when it is all summed up, shall not at last amount to a *Reality*? Surely, *Christ* did not undergo all this to so little Purpose; He would not take all this Pains for us, that He might be able at last, to put into our Hands, nothing but a Blank. He *was with Child*, He *was in Pain and Travail*, and hath He brought forth nothing but *Wind*? Hath He been delivered of the *East Wind*? Is that great Design that was so long carried in the Womb of Eternity, now proved Abortive, or else but a mere windy Birth? No surely, the End of the Gospel is *Life and Perfection*, 'tis a *Divine Nature*, 'tis a *Godlike* Frame and Disposition of Spirit; 'tis to make us Partakers of the *Image of God* in Righteousness and true Holiness. *Christ* came indeed into the World, to make an Atone-
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ment for our Sins, but the End of this was, that we might eschew Sin, that we might forsake *all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts*. The Gospel declares Pardon of Sin to those, that are *heavy laden* with it, to this End, that it might enliven us to new Obedience. Whereas otherwise, the *Guilt* of Sin might have detained us in Horror and Despair, and so have kept us still more strongly under the *Power* of it, in dismal Apprehensions of GOD's Wrath provoked against us, and inevitably falling on us. But *Christ* hath now appeared, like a *Day-Star* with chearful Beams; nay, He is the *Sun of Righteousness Himself*; which hath risen upon the World with his *healing Wings*, that He might chase away all those black despairing Tho'ts. But *Christ* did not rise, that we should play, and sport, with his Light; but that we should do *the Works of the Day* in it: That we should walk not in our *Night-cloaths* of sinful Deformity, but clad all over with the comely *Garments of Light*. The Gospel is not big with Child of *Fancy*, a mere *Conceit* of Righteousness without us, hanging at a Distance over us; whilst our Hearts within, are nothing but Cages of *unclean Birds*, nay the Rendezvous of Fiends of Darknes. Holiness is the best Thing, that GOD Himself can bestow upon us, either in this World, or the World to come. True evangelical Holiness, that is, *Christ formed* in the Hearts of Believers, is the very Quintessence of the *Gospel*. And were our Hearts sound within, were there not many thick and dark Fumes that did arise from thence, and cloud our Understandings, we could not easily conceive the Substance of Heaven itself, to be any Thing else but *Holiness*, freed from those Encumbrances, that did ever clog it here; neither should we wish for any other Heaven, besides this. But many of us are like those Children, whose Stomachs are so vitiated.

ated by some Disease, that they think, Ashes, Coal, or any such Trash, to be more pleasant than the most wholesome Food: Such sickly Appetites have we about these spiritual Things, that hanker after I know not what vain Shews of Happiness, whilst in the mean Time we neglect that which is the only true Food of our Souls, that is able solidly to nourish them to *everlasting Life*. Grace is *Holiness militant*, Holiness encumbered with many Enemies and Difficulties, which it still fights against, and manfully quits itself of: And Glory is nothing else, but *Holiness triumphant*; Holiness with a Palm of Victory in her Hand, and a Crown upon her Head. GOD *Himself cannot make me happy, if He be only without me; unless He give a Participation of Himself, and his own Likeness into my Soul*. I mean by Holiness, nothing else but GOD stamped, and printed upon the Soul. And we may please ourselves, with what Conceits we will; but so long as we are void of this, we do but *dream* of Heaven; we do but blow up and down an *airy Bubble* of our own Fancies, which riseth out of the Froth of our vain Hearts; we do but court a *painted Heaven*; and woo Happiness in a *Picture*: Whilst in the mean Time, a *true and real Hell* will suck in our Souls into it, and soon make us sensible of a *solid Woe*, and *substantial Misery*. Divine Wisdom hath so ordered the Frame of the whole Universe, that every Thing should have a proper Place, that should be a Receptacle for it. Hell is the Sink of all Sin and Wickedness. The strong *Magick* of Nature pulls and draws every Thing continually, to that Place which is suitable to it, and to which it doth belong; so all these heavy Bodies press downwards, towards the Centre of our Earth, being drawn in by it: In like Manner Hell wheresoever it is, will by strong

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Sympathy pull in all Sin to itself: As true Holiness, is always breathing upwards, and fluttering towards Heaven, striving to enbosom itself with God: And it will at last undoubtedly be conjoined with Him, no *dismal Shades* of Darkness, can possibly stop it in its Course; we do but deceive ourselves with Names; Hell is nothing but the Orb of Sin and Wickedness, or else that Hemisphere of Darkness, in which all Evil moves: And Heaven is the opposite Hemisphere of Light, the bright Orb of Truth, Holiness, and Goodness: And we actually in this Life instate ourselves in the Possession of one or other of them. Take Sin and Disobedience out of Hell, and it will presently clear up, into Light, Tranquility, Serenity, and shine out into a Heaven. Every true Saint carrieth his Heaven about with him, in his own Heart; and Hell that is without him, can have no Power over him. He might safely wade thro' Hell itself, and like the *Three Children*, pass thro' the Midst of that *fiery Furnace*, and yet not at all be scorched with the Flames of it: He might walk through the *Valley of the Shadow of Death*, and yet *fear no Evil*. Sin is the only Thing in the World, that is contrary to God: God is Light, and that is Darkness: God is Beauty, and that is Deformity. All Sin is direct Rebellion against God; and with what Notions soever we may sugar it, and sweeten it, yet God can never smile upon it, He will never make a Truce with it. God declares open War against Sin, and bids Defiance to it; for it is a professed Enemy to God's own Life and Being. God which is infinite Goodness, cannot but hate Sin, which is purely evil, and wheresoever it is, will be sure to scourge it, and lash it continually. God and Sin can never agree together.

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THAT, I may come yet nearer to ourselves. *This is the Message, that I have now to declare unto you, that GOD is Light, and in Him is no Darknes at all; if we say that we have Fellowship with Him, and walk in Darknes, we Lie, and do not the Truth. Christ, and the Gospel are Light, and there is no Darknes at all in them; if you say that you know Christ and his Gospel, and yet keep not Christ's Commandments, but dearly hug your private darling Corruptions; you are Liers, and the Truth is not in you; you have no Acquaintance with the GOD of Light, nor the Gospel of Light. If any of you say, that you know Christ, and have an Interest in Him, and yet, (as I fear, too many do) still nourish Ambition, Pride, Vain-glory within your Breasts; harbour Malice, Revenge, and Hatred to your Neighbours; eagerly scramble after this worldly Pelf, and make the Strength of your Parts and Endeavours serve that blind Mammom, the God of this World; if you wallow in the filthy Puddle of fleshly Pleasures, or if you aim only at yourselves in your Lives, and make yourself the Compass by which you Sail, and the Star by which you Steer your Course; deceive not yourselves, you have neither seen Christ, nor known Him; you are deeply Incorporated, (if I may so speak) with the Spirit of this World, and have no true Sympathy with GOD and Christ, no Fellowship at all with them. And (I beseech you) let us consider; be there not many of us, that pretend much to Christ, that are plainly in our Lives, as Proud, Ambitious, Vain-glorious as any others? Be there not many of us, that are as much under the Power of unruly Passions; as Cruel, Revengeful, Malicious, Censorious as others? That have our Minds as deeply engaged in the World, and as much envassalled to Riches, Gain, Profit, those admired Deities of the Sons of Men, and their Souls as much overwhelmed, and sunk with the*
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Cares of this Life? Be there not many of us that have as deep a Share in Injustice and Oppression, in *vexing the Fatherless and the Widows*? I wish, it may not prove some of our Cases, at that last Day, to use such Pleas as these unto *Christ*; LORD, *I have prophesied in thy Name*; I have preached many a zealous Sermon for Thee; I have kept many a long Fast; I have been very active for thy Cause in Church, in State; nay, I never made any Question, but that my Name was written in thy Book of Life; when yet alas, we shall receive no other return from *Christ*, but this, *I know you not; depart from Me ye workers of Iniquity*. I am sure, there be too many of us, that have long pretended to *Christ*, which make little or no Progress in *true Christianity*: That ever hang hovering in a *Twilight of Grace*, and never seriously put ourselves forwards into clear *Daylight*, but like that faint *Twilight*, better than broad open Day; whereas, *the Path of the Just is as the shining Light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect Day*. I am sure, there be many of us, that are perpetual *Dwarfs* in our spiritual Stature; like those *silly Women*, that are *ever learning, and never able to come to the Knowledge of the Truth*: That are not now one Jot taller in *Christianity*, than we were many Years ago; but have still as sickly, crazy, and unsound a Temper of Soul, as we had long before. Indeed we seem to do something, we are always moving and lifting at the Stone of Corruption, that lies upon our Hearts, but yet we never stir it, or at least never roll it off from us. We are sometimes a little troubled with the Guilt of our Sins, and then we think we must thrust our Lusts out of our Hearts; but afterwards we sprinkle ourselves over, with I know not what *Holy Water*, and so are contented to let them still abide. We every Day confess the same Sins, and pray against them, and yet commit them

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as much as ever, and lie as deeply under the Power of them. We have the same Water to pump out in every Prayer, and still we let the same, leak in again upon us. We make a great deal of Noise, and raise a great deal of Dust with our Feet; but we do not move from off the Ground on which we stood; or if we do sometimes make a little Progress, we quickly lose the Ground we had gained: As if Religion were nothing else, but a *Dancing* up and down, upon the same Piece of Ground; and not a sober Journeying, and Travelling onwards towards some certain Place. Like those *Danaides* which the *Poets* speaks of, we are always filling Water into a Sive, by our Prayers, Duties, and Performances; which still runs out as fast as we pour it in. What is it that thus cheats us of our Religion? That makes us, thus constantly to tread the same Ring, and Circle of Duties, where we make no Progress at all forwards; and the further we go, are still never the nearer to our Journeys End? What is it that thus starves our Religion; and makes it look like those *Kine* in *Pharaoh's* Dream, *ill favoured and lean fleshed*; that it hath no Colour in its Face, no Blood in his Veins, no Life nor Heat at all, in its Members? What is it that doth thus *Bedwarf* us in our *Christianity*? What low, sordid, and unworthy Principles do we act by, that thus hinder our Growth, and make us stand at a Stay, and keep us always in the very Porch and Entrance? Is it a sleepy, sluggish Conceit, that it is enough for us, if we be but once in a *State of Grace*, if we have but once stepped over the Threshold, we need not take so great Pains to travel any further? Or is it another damping, choaking, stifling Opinion, that *Christ* hath done all for us already *without us*? No Matter, how wicked we be in ourselves, for we have Holiness *without us*; no Matter, how sickly and diseased our Souls

Souls be within, for they have Health *without them*. Why may we not as well be satisfied, and contented, to have Happiness without us too to all Eternity, and so ourselves for ever continue miserable? *Little Children, let no Man deceive you; he that doth Righteousness, is Righteous, even as he is Righteous: But he that committeth Sin is of the Devil.* I shall therefore exhort you in the wholesome Words of St. Peter; *Give all diligence, to add to your Faith, Virtue; and to Virtue, Knowledge; to Knowledge, Temperance; and to Temperance, Patience; to Patience, Godliness; and to Godliness, Brotherly Kindness; and to Brotherly Kindness, Charity; for if these Things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be Barren, nor Unfruitful in the Knowledge of our LORD Jesus Christ.* The Apostle still goes on, and I cannot leave him yet; *But he that lacketh these Things is Blind, and cannot see far off, and hath forgotten that he was once purged from his old Sins. Wherefore the rather Brethren, give Diligence to make your Calling and Election sure; for if ye do these Things, ye shall never fall.* Let us not only Talk and dispute of Christ, but let us indeed put on the LORD Jesus Christ. Having those great and precious Promises, which He hath given us, let us strive to be made partakers of the divine Nature, escaping the Corruption that is in the World through Lust: and being begotten again to a Lively Hope of enjoying Christ hereafter, let us purify ourselves as He is pure. Let us really declare, that we know Christ, that we are his Disciples, by our keeping his Commandments: And amongst the rest, that Commandment especially which our Saviour Christ Himself commendeth to his Disciples in a peculiar Manner; *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you: And again; these things I command you, that you love one another. Let us follow Peace with all Men, and Holiness, without which, no Man shall see God.*

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Let us put on as the Elect of GOD, holy, and beloved, bowels of Mercies, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any Man have a Quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave us: And above all these Things let us put on Charity, which is the Bond of Perfection. Let us in Meekness, instruct those that oppose themselves, if GOD peradventure will give them Repentance, to the Acknowledging of the Truth, that they may recover themselves out of the Snares of the Devil, that are taken Captive by him at his Will. Beloved, let us love another, for Love is of GOD, and whosoever loveth, is born of GOD and knoweth GOD. O Divine Love! The sweet Harmony of Souls! The Musick of Angels! The Joy of GOD's own Heart, the very Darling of his Bosom! The Source of true Happiness! The pure Quintessence of Heaven! That which reconciles the jarring Principles of the World, and makes them all chime together! That which melts Mens Hearts into one another! See how St. Paul describes it, and it cannot chuse but enamour your Affections towards it: Love envieth not, it is not puffed up, it doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no Evil, rejoiceth not in Iniquity; beareth all Things, believeth all Things, hopeth all Things, endureth all Things: I may add in a Word, it is the best natur'd Thing in the World. Let us express this sweet harmonious Affection, in these jarring Times; that so if it be possible, we may tune the World, at last, into better Musick. Especially, in Matters of Religion, let us strive with all Meekness to instruct and convince one another. Let us endeavour to promote the Gospel of Peace, the Dove-like Gospel with a Dove-like Spirit. This was the Way by which the Gospel at first was propagated in the World: Christ did not cry, nor lift up his Voice in the Streets, a bruised Reed He did not break,
and

and the smoaking Flax He did not quench, and yet He brought forth Judgment into Victory. He whispered the Gospel to us from Mount Sion, in a still Voice, and yet the Sound thereof went out quickly throughout all the Earth. The Gospel at first came down upon the World gently and softly, like the *Dew* upon *Gideon's Fleece*, and yet it quickly soaked quite through it: And doubtless this is still the most effectual Way to promote it. Sweetness, and Tenderness, will more powerfully command Mens Minds, than Passion, Sourness, and Severity: As the soft Pillow sooner breaks the Flint, than the hardest Marble. Let us *follow Truth in Love*: And of the two indeed, be contented rather, to miss of the conveying a speculative Truth, than to part with Love. When we would convince Men of any Error by the Strength of *Truth*, let us withal pour the sweet Balm of Love upon their Heads. *Truth* and *Love* are the two most powerful Things in the World, and when they both go together, they cannot easily be withstood. The golden Beams of Truth, and the silken Cords of Love, twisted together, will draw Men on with a sweet Violence, whether they will or no. Let us take heed we do not sometimes call that Zeal for God, and his Gospel, which is nothing else but our own tempestuous and stormy Passion. True Zeal is a sweet, heavenly, and gentle Flame, which maketh us active for God, but always within the Sphere of Love. It never calls for *Fire from Heaven*, to consume those that differ from us in their Apprehensions. It is like that Kind of Lightning, that melts the Sword within, but singeth not the Scabbard: It strives to save the Soul but hurteth not the Body. True Zeal is a loving Thing, and makes us always active to *Edification*, and not to *Destruction*. If we keep the Fire of Zeal within the Chimny, in its own proper Place, it never doth any Hurt; it only warmeth, quickeneth,

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and enliveneth us: But if once we let it break out, and catch hold of the Thatch of our Flesh, and kindle our corrupt Nature, and set the House of our Body on Fire, it is no longer Zeal, it is no longer Heavenly Fire, it is a most destructive and devouring Thing. True Zeal is a soft and gentle Flame, that will not scorch ones Hand; it is no voracious Thing: But *carnal and fleshly Zeal*, is like Gunpowder set on Fire, that tears and blows up all that stands before it. True Zeal is like the *vital Heat* in us, which we never feel to be angry or troublesome; but that other furious and distempered Zeal, is nothing but a Fever in the Soul. To conclude, we may learn what kind of Zeal it is that we should make use of in promoting the Gospel, by an Emblem of God's own, given us in the Scripture, those *fiery Tongues* that upon the Day of *Pentecost*, sat upon the Apostles; which sure were harmless Flames, for we cannot read that they did any Hurt, or that they did so much as singe an Hair of their Heads. I will therefore shut up this, with that of the Apostle: *Let us keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.* Let this soft and silken Knot of *Love* tie our Hearts together; though our Heads and Apprehensions cannot meet, as indeed they never will, but always stand at some Distance off from one another. Our Zeal if it be Heavenly, if it be true *vestal Fire* kindled from above, it will not delight to tarry here below, burning up Straw and Stubble, and such combustible Things, and sending up nothing but gross earthy Fumes to Heaven; but it will rise up, and return back, pure as it came down, and will ever be striving to carry up Mens Hearts to God along with it. It will be only occupied, about the promoting of those Things, which are *unquestionably good*, and removing Sin. Here let our Zeal exercise itself, every one of us beginning at our own Hearts. Let us be more zealous than ever we have
yet

yet been, in fighting against our Lusts, in pulling down those *strong Holds of Sin and Satan* in our Hearts. Here let us exercise all our Courage and Resolution, our Manhood and Magnanimity. Let us trust in the *Almighty Arm* of our GOD, and doubt not, but He will as well deliver us, from the Power of Sin in our Hearts, as preserve us from the *Wrath to come*. Let us go out against these *uncircumcised Philistines*, I mean our Lusts, not with *Shield or Spear*, not in any Confidence of our own Strength, but in the Name of the LORD of Hosts, and we shall prevail: We shall overcome our Lusts, *For greater is He that is in us, than he that is in them*. The eternal GOD is our Refuge, and underneath are the everlasting Arms: He shall thrust out these Enemies from before us, and He shall say, *destroy them*. We shall enter the true Canaan, the good Land of Promise, that floweth with Milk and Honey, the Land of Truth and Holiness. Wherefore take unto you the whole Armour of GOD, that you may be able to withstand: Let your Loins be girt about with Truth; have on the Breast-plate of Righteousness; and let your Feet be shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace. Above all take the Shield of Faith, whereby you shall be able to quench all the fiery Darts of the Wicked, and take the Helmet of Salvation, and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of GOD. And lastly, be sure of this, that ye be strong only in the LORD, and in the Power of his Might. There be some that dishearten us in this spiritual Warfare, and would make us let our Weapons fall out of our Hands, by working in us a despair of Victory. There be some evil Spies, that weaken the Hands and the Hearts of the Children of Israel; and bring an ill Report upon that Land that we are to conquer, telling of nothing but strange Giants, the Sons of Anak there, that we shall never be able to overcome. The Amalekites (say they) dwell in the South, the Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites

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morites in the Mountains, and the Canaanites by the Sea-coast: Huge Armies of tall invincible Lusts: *We shall never be able to go against this People, we shall never be able to prevail against our Corruptions. Hearken not unto them (I beseech you) but hear what Caleb and Joshua say; Let us go up at once, and possess it, for we are able to overcome them: Not by our own Strength, but by the Power of the LORD of Hosts.* There are indeed *Sons of Anak* there, there are mighty giant-like Lusts, that we are to grapple with; nay, there are *Principalities*, and *Powers* too, that we are to oppose: But the great *Michael, the Captain of the LORD's Host* is with us; he commands in chief for us, and we need not be dismayed. *Understand therefore this Day, that the LORD thy GOD is He, which goeth before thee, as a consuming Fire, He shall destroy these Enemies, and bring them down before thy Face.* If thou wilt be faithful to Him, and put thy Trust in Him; *as the Fire consumeth the Stubble, and as the Flame burneth up the Chaff,* so will He destroy thy Lusts in thee: *Their Root shall be Rottenness, and their Blossom shall go up as Dust.* What therefore the Wiseman speaks concerning *Wisdom*, I shall apply to *Holiness*: *Take fast hold of Holiness,—let her not go, keep her for she is thy Life: Keep thy Heart with all Diligence, for out of it are the Issues of Life, and of Death too.* Let nothing be esteemed of greater Consequence to thee, than what thou dost and actest, how thou livest. Nothing *without* us can make us either happy, or miserable; nothing can either *defile* us, or hurt us, but what goeth out from us, what springeth up, out of our own Hearts. We have dreadful Apprehensions of the Flames of Hell without us; we tremble and are afraid, when we hear of *Fire and Brimstone*, whilst in the mean time, we securely nourish in our own Hearts, a true and living Hell.

—Et

— *Et cæca carpimur igni:*

The dark Fire of our Lusts, consumeth our Bowels within, and miserably scorcheth our Souls, and we are not troubled at it. We do not perceive, how Hell steals upon us, whilst we live here. And as for Heaven, we only gaze abroad, expecting that it should come in to us from without, but never look for the Beginnings of it to arise within, in our own Hearts.

BUT lest there should yet remain any Prejudice against that, which I have all this while commended to you; *true Holiness*, and the *Keeping of Christ's Commandments*; as if it were a *legal and servile Thing*, that would subject us to a *State of Bondage*, I must add a Word or two, either for the Prevention or Removal of it. I do not therefore mean, by *Holiness*, the mere Performance of outward Duties, acted over as a Task, not our habitual Prayings, Hearings, Fastings, multiplied one upon another (though these be all good, as subservient to an higher End) but I mean an inward *Principle of Divine Life*, that spiriteth all these; that enliveneth and quickeneth the dead Carcass of all our outward Performances. I do not here urge the *dead Law of outward Works*, which indeed if it be alone, subjects us to a *State of Bondage*; but the *inward Law* of the Gospel, the *Law of the Spirit of Life*, than which nothing can be more free and ingenuous: For it doth not act us by Principles without us, but is a *self-moving Principle*, living in our Hearts. I do not urge the Law written upon *Tables of Stone* without us (though there is still a good Use of that too) but the Law of Holiness written within, upon the *fleshy Tables of our Hearts*. The first, though it work us into some outward Conformity to God's
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Commandments, and hath so good Effect upon the World; yet we are all this while, but like dead Instruments of Musick, that sound sweetly, when they are only struck, and played upon from without, by the Musician's Hand, who hath the Theory and *Law* of Musick *living* within himself. But the second, the *living* Law of the Gospel, the *Law of the Spirit of Life* within us, is as if the *Soul of Musick*, should incorporate itself with the Instrument, and live in the Strings, and make them of their own Accord, without any Touch, or Impulse from without, dance up and down, and warble out their Harmonies. This *new Law of the Gospel*, it is a Kind of *Musical Soul*, informing the dead *Organ* of our Hearts, that makes them of their own Accord delight to act harmoniously according to the Rule of GOD's Word. The Law that I speak of, it is a *Law of Love*, which is the most powerful Law in the World; and yet it freeth us in a Manner from all Law without us, because it maketh us become a *Law unto ourselves*. The more it prevaieth in us, the more it eateth up and devoureth, all other Laws without us; just as Aaron's *living Rod* did swallow up those Rods of the Magicians, that were made only to counterfeit a little Life. Love is at once a Freedom from all Law, a State of purest Liberty, and yet a Law to, of the most constraining and indispensable Necessity. The worst *Law* in the World, is the *Law of Sin, which is in our Members*; which keeps us in a Condition of most absolute Slavery, when we are wholly under the tyrannical Commands of our Lusts: This is a cruel *Pharaoh* indeed, that sets his hard Task-masters over us, and maketh us wretchedly drudge in Mire and Clay. The *Law of the Letter* without us, sets us in a Condition of a little more Liberty, by restraining us from many outward Acts of Sin; but yet it doth not.

not disenthral us, from the Power of Sin in our Hearts. But the *Law of the Spirit of Life*, the *Gospel-law of Love*, puts us into a Condition of pure and perfect Liberty; and whosoever really entertains this Law, he hath *thrust out Hagar* quite, he hath *cast out the Bond-woman and her Children*; from henceforth, Sarah the *Free-woman* shall live for ever with him, and she shall be to him, a Mother of many Children; her Seed shall be *as the Sand of the Sea Shore for Number*, and as *the Stars of Heaven*. Here is Evangelical Liberty, here is Gospel Freedom, when *the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, hath made us free, from the Law of Sin and Death*: When we have a Liberty from Sin, and not a Liberty to sin: For our dear LORD and Master hath told us, that *whosoever committeth Sin, he is the Servant of it*. He that lies under the Power of his base Lusts, and yet talks of Gospel-Freedom; he is but like a poor condemned Prisoner, that in his Sleep dreams of being set at Liberty, and of walking up and down wheresoever he pleaseth; whilst his Legs are all the while fast in Irons. To please ourselves with a Notion of Gospel-liberty, whilst we have not a Gospel Principle of Holiness within us, to free us from the Power of Sin, is nothing else, but to gild over our Fetters. There is a Straitness, Slavery, and Narrowness in all Sin; Sin crowds and crumples all our Souls, which if they were freely spread abroad, would be as wide as the whole Universe. No Man is truly free, but he that hath his *Will* enlarged to the Extent of God's Will, by loving whatsoever God loves, and nothing else. Such a one doth not fondly hug this and that particular created Good, and envassal himself unto it, but he loveth every Thing that is lovely, beginning at God, and descending down to all his Creatures, according to the several Degrees of Perfection in them.

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them. He enjoys a boundless Liberty, and a boundless Sweetness, according to his boundless Love. He incompasseth the whole World within his outstretched Arms, his Soul is as wide as the whole Universe, as big as *Yesterday, to Day, and for ever.* Whosoever is once acquainted with this Disposition of Spirit, he never desires any Thing else; and he loves the *Life of GOD* in himself, dearer than his own Life. To conclude this, If we love *Christ*, and keep his *Commandments*, his *Commandments* will not be grievous to us: *His Yoke will be easy, and his Burden light*: It will not put us into a State of Bondage, but of perfect Liberty. For it is most true of evangelical Obedience, what the wise Man speaketh of Wisdom; *Her Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace; She is a Tree of Life to those that lay Hold upon her, and happy are all they that retain her.*

I WILL now shut up all with one or two *Considerations* to persuade you further, to the *Keeping of Christ's Commandments.*

FIRST, From the Desire which we all have of *Knowledge*; if we would indeed *know* Divine Truths, the only Way to come to this, is by *keeping of Christ's Commandments.* The Grossness of our Apprehensions in *spiritual Things*, and our many Mistakes about them, proceed from nothing, but those dull and foggy *Steams*, which rise up from our *foul Hearts* and becloud our Understandings. If we did but heartily comply with *Christ's Commandments*, and purge our Hearts from all gross and sensual Affections, we should not then look about for *Truth* wholly without ourselves, and enslave ourselves to the Dictates of this and that Teacher, and hang upon the *Lips of Men*; but we should find the great eternal GOD, inwardly,

wardly teaching our Souls, and continually instructing us more and more, in the Mysteries of his Will: And *out of their Bellies should flow Rivers of Living Waters.* Nothing puts a Stop and Hindrance to the Passage of Truth in the World, but the Carnality of our Hearts, and the Corruption of our Lives. 'Tis not wrangling Disputes, that are mighty Pillars, that underprop Truth in the World; if we would but underset it with the Holiness of our Hearts and Lives, it should never fail. Truth is a conquering Thing, and would quickly overcome the World, did not the Earthiness of our Dispositions, and the Darkeness of our false Hearts hinder it. Our Saviour *Christ* bids the *Blind Man*, wash off the *Clay* that was upon his Eyes, in the *Pool of Siloam*, and then he should see clearly; intimating, that it is the Earthiness of Mens Affections, that darkens the Eye of their Understandings in spiritual Things. Truth is always ready, if our Eyes were not closed up with Mud, that we could but open them, to look upon it. Truth always waits upon our Souls, and offers itself freely to us, as the Sun offers its Beams to every Eye, that will but open, and let them shine in upon it. If we could but purge our Hearts, from that Filth and Defilement, which hangeth about them, there would be no Doubt at all of Truths prevailing in the World. For, *Truth is great, and stronger than all Things: All the Earth calleth upon Truth, and the Heaven blesseth it, all Works shake and tremble at it. The Truth endureth, and is always strong, it liveth and conquereth for evermore. She is the Strength, Kingdom, Power and Majesty of all Ages. Blessed be the GOD of Truth.*

LAST of all, if we desire a true Reformation, as we seem to do; let us begin here in reforming
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our *Hearts* and *Lives*; in *keeping* of *Christ's* *Commandments*. All outward Forms and Models of Reformation, tho' they be never so good in their Kind; yet they are of little Worth to us, without this *inward Reformation* of the Heart. Tin, or Lead, or any other baser Metal, if it be cast into never so good a Mould, and made up into never so elegant a Figure; yet it is but Tin, or Lead still, it is the same Metal that it was before. And if we be moulded into never so good a Form of outward Government, unless we *new mould* our *Hearts* within; we are but little better than we were before. If adulterate Silver, that hath much Allay or Dross in it, have never so current a Stamp put upon it, yet it will not pass notwithstanding, when the Touch-stone trieth it. We must be *reformed within*, with a *Spirit* of *Fire*, and a *Spirit* of *Burning*, to purge us from the Dross, and Corruption of our Hearts; and refine us as Gold and Silver; and then we shall be *reformed truly*, and not before. When this once comes to pass, then shall *Christ* be set upon his *Throne* indeed, then the *Glory of the LORD* shall overflow the Land; then we shall be a People acceptable unto Him, and as *Mount Sion*, which He dearly loved.

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EXTRACTS
FROM THE
WORKS
OF

Nathanael Culverwelt,

Some Time FELLOW of *Emanuel-Col-*
lege, CAMBRIDGE.

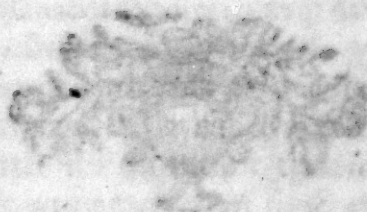


EXTRACTS

WORKS



Some Time Fellow of Emmanuel College
Cambridge

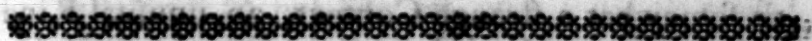


THE

END



THE
ACT of OBLIVION.



ISAIAH xliiii. 25.

I, even I am He that blot out thy Transgressions for mine own Sake, and will not remember thy Sins.

VERY Promise is a Breast full of Consolation, that would fain be drawn: And as *Job* speaking of the Breasts, calls them very elegantly, the Milk-Pails of the Breast; they are, as it were, *Carnea Mulctralia*: So there are the Receptacles of that *ἄδολον γάλα*, which is stored up for Babes in *Christ*, where the thirsty Soul may come and fill itself with most precious Sweetness. In the whole Word of God there is most sincere Milk; but the Promises they are the purest and sweetest of. all.

HERE'S a Bottle filled with heavenly Dew, which will never fail like that of *Hagar's*; but cherish the Soul, 'till it come to a Well of Life. Here's a pure Emanation of GOD's sweetest Love, which would fain communicate itself to a sinful Creature; and therefore puts on the most amiable Expressions that the Wisdom of GOD Himself can cloath it with, while He breathes out free Grace, by the Mouth of his Prophet, to a disobedient and rebellious *Israel*, and beseeches them to be reconciled unto Him.

AND if you look but upon the foregoing Words, you will wonder how this *Verse* should come in; 'tis somewhat a strange Context, an unusual Kind of Coherence. For GOD there complains by his Prophet, that his People of *Israel* had done Nothing at all for Him; He took them indeed for his pleasant Plant, but they were a very barren and ungrateful Plant; He had made them a choice and a spreading Plant, but not one delicious Cluster was to be found upon them. In the *Verse* immediately before, *Thou hast bought me no sweet Cane with Money*; 'tis meant of that Cane, which was to be a chief Ingredient in the precious Ointment, as you may see in *Exod. xxx.* *Neither hast thou made me to drink the Fat of thy Sacrifices*; or, as the Words flow in the Fountain, *לֹא הִרְיוּנִי Thou hast not moistened me abundantly with thy Sacrifices*: Not that the *Jews* did neglect these Duties of GOD's Worship; no, they were very punctual in observing them; but the Force of the Complaint lies in this, thou did'st them not unto Me. For

I. THOU did'st them not with that Chearfulness of Spirit which I required of thee, and might well expect from thee. Love should have dropp'd Oil into the Wheels, and thy Soul should have moved

moved like the Chariots of *Aminadab*; but thou wentest on heavily, and lookedst upon my Service as an hard Yoke, more intolerable than that of *Egypt*.

2. THOU trustedst in thy legal Performances, and thought'st to be justified by thine own Righteousness; thou did'st them not for those Ends which I aimed at, for I intended only to raise thy Thoughts higher to that great Salvation which I had stored up for thee in the *Messias*.

3. THOU did'st them not to Me, while thou restedst in a fair Flourish of outward Formality, and thou thought'st to put Me off with a Mock-worship, with a meer Outside and Surface of Devotion; in giving Me a Shell, and Nothing of the Kernel: Thou could'st Sin against Me when thou list-edst, and then thought'st to appease Me with a Sacrifice. *I hate your Burnt-Offerings, my Soul nauseates your solemn Assemblies: Bring me no more vain Oblations.* He that will be my Servant, let him seal up every spiritual Service with Integrity of Heart. A pure Soul, that's the only Present fit for a GOD; a Gift that may be united to GOD Himself, as *Hierocles* speaks; *Sacrifices and Burnt-Offerings He would not have*; then thou should'st have said, *Lo, I come, to do thy Will, O my GOD!* Thou should'st have presented thyself a living and a reasonable Sacrifice; for, without this, all others were no better than Fewel for Fire. *Thou did'st not make me to drink the Fat of thy Sacrifices.* Well, but they stay not here; *Thou hast made Me to serve with thy Sins; and thou hast wearied Me with thine Iniquities; thou hast made Me to serve with thy Sins; that's either*

1. THOU hast so abused My Patience, and long Sufferance; and hast heap't Sin upon Sin, as if I had been a very Servant, that was bound to endure all these thine Iniquities: Or else

2. IT is a more prophetical Passage looking upon *Christ*, who took upon Him the Form of a Servant, and bore our Sins in his Body upon the Tree.

3. THOU hast made Me to serve with thy Sins, whilst thou do'st these Things under a Shew of Holiness, and Care of pleasing Me; as a peculiar People that served an holy GOD, and had righteous Laws; and yet while thou neglectedst the more weighty Things that I require of thee, thou do'st dishonour my Name, and wrong my Law, and degenerate from those noble Principles that I had planted in thee. For what will the Heathen say; that I am a GOD that delight in the Blood of Bulls and Goats, and give thee Liberty in other Things to do what thou list? *Thou hast made me to serve with thy Sins.* And consider what a strong Indignity this is offered to the great GOD of Heaven and Earth, to make Him a Servant, and then to serve Sin, which He so much hates and abhors, that He can't endure to look upon it, as that which strikes at his very Being: *Thou hast made me to serve with thy Sins;* and *thou hast wearied Me with thine Iniquities:* All outward Performances, though never so pompous, do but weary Almighty GOD, unless they flow from a sincere Spirit: They thought they had pleased Him with Sacrifices; but He tells them, *they weary Him with Iniquities.* And see here how the mighty GOD of *Jacob*, the Rock of Ages; Omnipotency itself is weary; He is press'd with Sins, and weary'd with Iniquities. Well, what follows upon all this: *I, even I am He that blot out thine Iniquities*

Iniquities for mine own Sake, and will not remember thy Sins. Surely Israel could not look for this in the next Verse. One would have thought it should have been, *I, even I am He*, that will revenge these thine Iniquities: *Thou hast made Me to serve with thy Sins*, and I'll make thee to serve with my Plagues: *Thou hast wearied me with thine Iniquities*, and I'll weary thee with my Judgments: Mine Indignation shall flame out against thee, and I'll pour out the Dregs of my Wrath upon thee; it is *I, even I am He*, that will set thy Sins in Order before thee. One would have thought it should have run thus; but GOD, He comes in the still Voice, *I, even I am He, that blot out thine Iniquities.* *Thou hast made Me to serve with thy Sins*, and I'll make thee a Servant to Myself: *Thou hast wearied Me with thine Iniquities*, and I'll load thee with my Mercies: *Thou hast blotted out My Testimonies*, and I'll blot out thine Iniquities: *Thou hast not remembered My Covenant*, and I'll not remember thy Sins. Thus does God's Goodness contend with a sinful Nation; thus doth He conquer Rebellion, and triumph over Sin. Indeed his very Drift is to make a glorious Illustration of free Grace; and therefore He first discovers his Peoples Sin, and then displays his own Mercy. He first shews *Israel's* stiff Neck and Iron Sinew, and then opens his own tender Bowels, and dearest Compassions; He bids you take Notice of the Blackness of the *Ethiopian*, and then tells you how white He will make him. He would have you consider well the deep Dye, the bloody Dye of the Scarlet, and then see it becomes as white as Snow. Look upon the Vastness of the *Egyptian* Army, and see them all drowned in a *Red-Sea*. Cast a sad Eye upon a large Volume of Iniquity, and behold them all blotted out in a Moment. The Sinfulness of Sin sets a glorious Lustre upon Grace; when Sin becomes exceeding sinful, then

then Grace becomes exceeding glorious. *I, even I am He, that blot out thine Iniquities.* There's much Emphasis in redoubling the Words, and it stills many Objections that might rise up in a wavering Soul. And

I. *I, EVEN I*, whom thou hast offended: For what might the distrusting Soul object and say: Is it Thou, O GOD, that wilt blot out mine Iniquities? It is thy sacred Majesty which I have provok'd; and 'tis thy glorious Name which I have profan'd; 'tis thy righteous Law which I have violated; and 'tis thy Covenant which I have broken; and is it Thou, O GOD, that wilt blot out mine Iniquities? *הן אנוכי אנוכי*, 'tis *I, even I am He that blot them out for my own sake.* GOD's Goodness runs over to a sinful Creature; and where Sin hath abounded, there Grace doth superabound. Consider

(1.) THERE is not so much Evil in Sin, as Good in GOD. Sin indeed is thus infinite, as it is against an infinite Being; but there is an absolute Infiniteness in GOD. And this is no Extenuation of Sin to advance Grace above it.

(2.) There is not so much Sin in Man, as there is Goodness in GOD. There is a vaster Disproportion between Sin and Grace, than between a Spark and an Ocean. Now, who would doubt whether a Spark could be quench'd in an Ocean? Thy Thoughts of Disobedience towards GOD have been within the Compass of Time; but his Goodness hath been bubbling up towards thee from all Eternity. He hath had gracious Contrivances of Love towards thee from Everlasting. The Devils themselves, though irreversibly seal'd to Destruction; yet they are not so bad as GOD is good. *I, even I am He that blot out thine Iniquities; even I whom thou hast thus offended.*

2. I, EVEN I, whose Royal Prerogative it is to pardon Transgression, and to blot out Sin; for otherwise the Soul would still be left rolling and fluctuating. This were welcome News indeed to hear of Iniquity blotted out, and they were Messengers of beautiful Feet, that could bring me such Gospel-Tidings; but oh 'tis not so easy a Matter to have Sin remitted, and pardoning Mercy is not so soon obtained: Who is it that can wash off Guilt from the Soul, and set at Liberty a captivated Spirit? Why, 'tis GOD Himself that undertakes so great a Work; 'tis I, even *I am He that blot out thine Iniquities*, and it includes these two Particulars:

(1.) GOD, He can blot out our Iniquities. For first, the Offence is wholly against Him, and therefore He can freely pass it by: Sin is so far an Evil, as it opposes his Will, the Rule of Goodness, and as it swerves from his Law, the Expression of his Will, and that the Supreme Law-giver can pardon.

(2.) CHRIST hath made full Satisfaction to his Justice, so that now 'tis but dipping the Pen in the Blood of *Christ*, and dashing out of Iniquity: Nay *Christ* Himself hath blotted out, even this Hand-Writing that was against us, and nail'd it to his Cross. And hence there are such Wooings and Be-seechings of Souls to come in and be subject to the Scepter of *Christ*; for GOD hath more Satisfaction to his Justice by every Believer, than by the Damned that lie roaring in Hell to all Eternity, for they are never able to discharge the Debt; but every Believer by his Surety hath paid the utmost Farthing.

2. ONLY GOD can blot out Iniquities. *I, even I am He, and none else.* A poor Creature may soon involve itself in Sin and Misery, there is none but hath Power enough to damn himself: *Thy Destruction*

tion is of Thyself, O Ephraim. But 'tis beyond the Sphere of Men, or Angels Activity, to blot out the least Sin, or to disentangle the Soul of the least Corruption; they can neither take off the Guilt of Sin, nor yet subdue the Power of it. There's none but knows how to wound himself; but he must have Skill that knows how to cure himself; 'tis easy enough to run into Debt, and many find it hard enough to discharge it: There's none but can heap up Sin, and Treasure up Wrath, and wound Conscience: But who is there that can appease Wrath and calm Conscience, and screen a Soul from a consuming Fire? Sin is an Offence against an infinite Justice, so that infinite Being can either dispense with it, or satisfy for it. It is not the blessed Virgin's Milk can wash out so deep a Stain, it is not this can whiten the Soul; no, if the Saints Robes be wash'd white, it must be in the Blood of the Lamb. And the Power of the Keys can't reach thus far. A Minister can no more by any Way of Efficacy remit a Sin, than he can create a World. And I know not what a Pope's Indulgence should do, unless it be to send some ignorant People to Hell with more Chearfulness, that they may descend into Heaven, as the *Satyrist* said *Nero* did; when they look for Heaven, drop into Hell irrecoverably. The mighty Hand of God Himself must be put to the blotting out of Iniquities; 'tis *I*, even *I that blot out thy Transgression*, even *I* whose Royal Prerogative 'tis to pardon Transgression, and to blot out Sin.

3. *I*, even *I* that have manifested mine Anger against thee, in punishing thee for thine Iniquities; even *I am He that will blot them out*, for the Soul will still be doubting and misgiving; why, 'tis Thou O God, that hast shot off so many Threatnings against us, and spent all thine Arrows upon us: Thou hast hewn us by thy Prophets, and slain us by the Words

Words of thy Mouth: Thou hast dip'd thy Pen in Gall, and writ bitter things against us: Thou hast followed us with an whole Army of Judgments, and every way shown thyself an angry GOD; and wilt Thou now blot out our Iniquities? The Text hath the same Answer ready for this too: 'Tis I, even *I am He, that will blot them out*; and it speaks these two Things:

(1.) GOD, He is not long angry; as 'tis in the 54th of *Isaiah*, ver. 8. *In a little Wrath I hid my Face from thee for a Moment; but with everlasting Kindness will I have Mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.* GOD as He is not quickly provok'd, so neither is He long displeased. *GOD is Love*, saith the Apostle; now Love is hardly provok'd, and quickly reconcil'd: *GOD is Love.* He writes not Injuries in Marble, his Law indeed He writes in Stone; but the Breach of the Law, He writes that in the Dust. All the Wrong hath been done to Him, and yet He beseeches us to be reconciled; He is far more ready to offer Mercy, than the Creature is to embrace it; and more willing to speak Peace, than Man is to hear it. Where will you meet with a Man so ready to put up a Wrong, and so ambitious to forgive an Injury? But *as far as the Heavens are above the Earth, so far are his Thoughts above our Thoughts*; He writes not our Sins in so deep a Character, but that they may be easily blotted out.

(2.) GOD requires no more Humiliation, than to bring a Soul unto Himself, and make it capable of Mercy. Many a weak Christian questions his Condition, because he hath not fill'd GOD's Bottles so full of Tears as others; he hath not had such Rendings of Heart; such Breakings and Piercings of Spirit, such scorching Apprehensions of Hell, and Wrath as others have had: But let such a one con-

fider, that GOD is very gracious in his Dealings, and we must not look for the like Degrees of Humiliation in all; some have a quicker Delivery, and are sooner freed from the Pangs of the New Birth; some Hearts are more wrought upon in a more winning and melting Way; others are beat in Pieces by a Stroke of Omnipotency. But this we are sure, that Soul is humbled enough that's brought to a Sight and Sense of his Sin, so as to see the Necessity of a Saviour; and to prize Him, and love Him as the fairest of Ten Thousand. When GOD hath made a Soul to see his Sins, He is ready then to blot them out; 'Tis I, even *I am He that blot out thine Iniquities*; even I that have punish'd thee for them, and shewn mine Anger against them.

I MIGHT add, that 'tis a Note of GOD's Complacency in his own Goodness, He doth even glory in the Riches of his Grace; and therefore 'tis so often repeated. *I, even I am He, that will do it for mine own sake*; but I hasten to the next Words.

Blot out thine Iniquities.] THERE are many Things wrapt up in this Expression. And

(1.) BLOTTING out of Iniquities, implies that they were all written and took Notice of.

1. THEY were written in GOD's Book. GOD knows all Things, every idle Word, every vain Thought, every Glance of the Soul; the least Tendency to Sin, the first Bubbling up of Original Corruption, they are all took Notice of: In this Book are all thine Iniquities written.

2. THOU hast a Book within thine own Breast, and Conscience hath the Pen of a ready Writer, it can write as fast as the Soul can dictate; with an
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accurate Pencil, it can give thee a full Pourtraiture of thy most private Behaviour, of thy most reserved Actions, of thy most retired Motions; and though there be a Curtain drawn over them here, yet then they shall be made very apparent. Such Works as thou would'st have suppress'd, shall be published to the Eyes of Men and Angels; Sins of the smallest Print, of the most indiscernable Character, shall be made clearly legible, and become as Atoms in the Presence of a Sun-beam. With what a furious Reflection wilt thou then read over thine own sinful Life; when all thine Iniquity shall stare thy Soul in the Face to all Eternity? When as a *Christian's* Life shall be set out in a new Edition; for all *Errata* shall be corrected. Every Iniquity shall be blotted out, and all *Desiderata* shall be supply'd; the Book shall become perfect, and be looked on as a fair Object to all Eternity.

(2.) EVERY Transgression leaves a Blot. For even Remission of Sins is express'd by blotting out of Iniquity. Altho' the Blot was here greater, before 'twas blotted out; for blotting out of Iniquities, is the wiping out of a Blot. Besides the Guilt of Sin, and the Power of Sin, there is *the Stain of Sin*.

(3.) YOU see here the Nature of Justification; it doth not take away the Being of Sin, but takes it away from being imputed, and laid to the Charge of the Soul. Sins in *Scripture-Idiom* are Debts: Now in Justification there's a crossing of the Book, a blotting out of the Debt, so as it can't be requir'd of the Soul. And the justified Person in the thirty-second *Psalms*, is stiled כסוי חטא, one whose Sin is covered, which supposes the Being of it; and tho' our Adversaries urge the Force of the other Phrase נשוי פשע, one whose Sin is took away; yet 'tis suf-

ficiently cleared by the following Words, לֹא יִחַשֵׁב לוֹ עוֹן יְהוָה, *GOD will not impute Iniquity unto Him.*

3. LOOK upon the Fulness of the Discharge. The Soul may rest satisfied, and roll itself upon the Grace of GOD in *Christ*, and lay all the Strefs of its Salvation upon it; the Debt is blotted out, and 'twere Injustice to ask it twice.

4. CONSIDER the Easiness of it. The Hand was longer a writing than 'tis a blotting out; the Hand was wearier with writing, than 'tis with blotting out: *I have blotted out thy Transgressions as a thick Cloud*, *Isaiah xlv. 22.* Now, how is a Cloud blotted out? Nay indeed, what is a Cloud but a Blot upon Nature's fairest and well-flourish'd Letter? A Sun-beam comes, rushes in upon't, wipes away the Cloud. The Sun fights against it; *Ἀγρυπναὶς λογχαῖσι*, it raises a glorious Army of Beams, which quickly puts the Enemy to Flight; they scatter the Cloud. And I'll blot out thy Transgressions like a Cloud. An Act of Grace, a Beam of Mercy shall blot out a whole Cloud of Transgressions; which otherwise would have proved a Cloud of Witnesses against the Soul.

5. HERE's the Extent of Remission; a great Debt may be blotted out as well as a less; a great Sum may be blotted out as well as a small one, though not so easily, though not so suddenly.

THINE *Iniquities.*] (1.) Thine, very *heinous* in their own Nature, as the Prophets continually complain.

(2.) MORE heinous, because *thine*. The Sins of *Israel* pierce deeper, grieve GOD most: It was a notable Speech of *Cosmus Duke of Florence*; I have read
read

read (saith he) that I must forgive mine Enemies, but never that I must forgive my Friends: The Sins of GOD's Friends, of his People provoke Him most. Every Sin is took Notice of; but the Sin of Judah is writ with a Pen of Iron, and the Point of a Diamond. They are against the Beams of stronger Light, against Bowels of tenderer Mercy, against nearer and sweeter Relations, against greater Expectation; GOD look'd for Grapes, and they bring forth wild Grapes. Yet, I will blot out thine Iniquities. Not only some of the less, and call thee to Account for the greater; no, such as are the most deeply aggravated, the most frequently reiterated.

FOR mine own Sake.] (1.) Exclusively, for nothing at all in you; as in that Twin-place. Ezek. xxxvi. 22. There you have a clear Comment upon the Words; *Thus saith the LORD GOD, I do not this for your Sakes; but for mine holy Name's Sake, which ye have profan'd amongst the Heathen.* Mark under what Notion it runs, for that holy Name's Sake which you have profan'd. And in this Chapter, in those Verses that are preparatory to the Text, we shew'd you how strangely Israel behaved themselves, ver. 22. *Thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob.* Why, one would have thought that they might have open'd the Mouth for Mercy, that they might at least have petitioned for Grace; surely, 'twas worth the Asking: No, but *I was found of them that sought Me not.*

(2.) FOR mine own Sake, it includes for my Christ's Sake, and that Covenant of Love and Peace which I have founded in Him. For GOD in Himself is an holy and a just GOD; and now by Reason of Sin, an offended GOD; and would

quickly prove a punishing, and revenging GOD; did not *Christ* step in and assuage an angry Deity.

(3.) FOR *mine own Sake*, for my Name's Sake, and for mine Honour's Sake; lest the Heathen triumph, and say, *Where is now your GOD?* O the infinite Goodness of GOD, that by a most gracious and free Act of his own Will, hath knit and united his own Glory, and the Salvation of his People together! He hath wrought *Israel's* Name in the Frame of his own Glory, so that now 'tis for his Honour's Sake to save *Israel*; He blots out Iniquities for his own Sake. GOD will not suffer the Lustre of his Crown to be dim'd and eclipsed; He will be sure that none of his Jewels shall fall off from it.

AND *will not remember thy Sins.*] The sinful Soul is full of Doubts and Suspicions; Certainly (saith he) if GOD should let me alone now, He will call me to Account for them hereafter; If He seem to blot them out now, He will write them again some Time or other. No, (saith GOD, *I'll blot out thy Transgressions, and will not remember thy Sins.* 'Tis an ordinary Speech in the Mouth of some silly ones, they will forgive, but never forget, it had need have a very candid Construction, a Grain of Salt is scarce enough to make it savoury; but GOD never forgives, but He doth forget too; when He blots out Iniquities, He remembers them no more. When the Sins are laid upon the Head of the Scape-Goat, they are then carried into a Land of Forgetfulness.

He will not remember them so as to call thee to Account for them, so as to upbraid thee with them, so as any Way to punish thee for them.

GUILT and Punishment are such Twins as live and die together, when the one's remitted, the other's never retained.

1. 'TWERE Injustice to punish where there is no Fault. GOD indeed may out of his absolute Dominion and Sovereignty, inflict an Evil upon an innocent Creature, but then it falls not under the Notion of a Punishment; and doth inflict Evils upon his own People, which flow from a fatherly Castigation, and not from a judicial Proceeding.

2. 'Tis against the very Nature of Remission. Do you call that forgiving of a Debt, to cast a Man into Prison for not discharging it? Or is that pardoning of a Traitor, to behead him for his Treason?

3. 'Tis injurious to the full Satisfaction of *Christ*; who drank up the whole Cup, all the Dregs of Wrath, not a Drop of that bitter Cup left for a Christian; they do indeed pledge Him, but 'tis in a sweeter Draught, and not at all in Satisfaction to Divine Justice. *Christ's* Resurrection was a full and plain Acquittance, a clear and apparent Sign that Iniquities were all blotted out.

QUEST. But doth not GOD revive former Sins, and reprint such Iniquities as He hath once blotted out?

ANSW. He doth indeed, but in Abundance of Love and Bowels of Free Grace: Not as an angry and revenging GOD; but 'tis to make thy Repentance for them, more deep and serious. And though GOD remember them no more; yet there's good Reason that the Soul should still remember

member them. (First) to make it more thankful to Him that blotted them out. (Secondly) to walk more humbly. (Thirdly) more watchfully and accurately.

AND thus we have took a brief Survey of the Text; we'll now strain the Quintessence of all into one Observation. *Justifying Grace, is Free Grace*; He blots out Iniquities for his own Sake: Every justified Person is a Monument of Free Grace, or in the *Psalmist's* Language; He's crown'd with Loving-kindness and Tender Mercies.

THE Grace of GOD is Free Grace; and that

FIRST, if you look to the *Spring* from whence it flows: That original Goodness, that Fountain-mercy. Now what was there in thee to persuade Him to all this? What were the Motives? Where were the Arguments? What was the Rhetorick?

1. IT was long before thou hadst any Being; thou wert hid in the Barren Womb of Nothing; thou hadst no Desire, no Thought of Happiness, and I can't well understand the Merit of a *Non-Entity*.

2. GOD might have had great Revenues of Glory out of thy eternal Ruin; now that he should choose to glorify the Riches of his Mercy in thy Happiness and Salvation, was most Free Grace.

SECONDLY, If you look to the several *Streamings* out of the Fountain, you must admire the Riches of Free Grace: For

1. GOD's

1. GOD's giving of his only Son, and founding a Covenant of Love and Peace in Him; the richest and most precious Stream that ever flow'd to the Sons of Men. Now if there were an Assembly of those bright and intelligent Creatures gathered together, the most glorious Cherubims and glittering Seraphims; and if this Mystery which they now pry into, were fully unsealed, and explain'd unto them; O how would they stand gazing upon the Riches of Grace, how would they think Eternity itself too short for the admiring it; and what could they resolve it into but mere Love! God *so loved the World*, so freely, so fully, so unconceiveably, *that He gave his only Son*. What was there in thee to draw a Saviour down from Heaven? Was there such an attractive Virtue in an undone and bankrupt Creature? How didst thou persuade Him to disrobe Himself of Light, as of a Garment, to cloud and eclipse the Lustre of his Divinity, by the Interposition of a pale mortal Body! What was it that mov'd Him to take upon Him the Seed of *Abraham*, and not the Nature of Angels, to let pass those fair and eminent Beings, and to advance a poor crawling Worm! Out of what Topicks didst thou fetch an Argument that prevail'd with Him, to espouse thee to Himself in Mercy and Truth, and so to love thee as to die for thee? I know thy Thoughts are swallowed up with the Consideration of so boundless and bottomless a Love, and desire some Time for Astonishment.

2. WHAT should I tell you of those free Expressions and Manifestations of this his Love; those fresh Eruptions of it in the Gospel? I mean those precious Promises, that are so many several Branchings out of the Covenant. The Gospel's like a sweet and precious Honey-comb, these are the

the several Droppings of it, that flow freely from it. Indeed the whole Gospel like the Midst of *Solomon's Bed* in the *Canticles*, is pav'd with Love.

3. **THINK** upon those free Offers of Grace, and Tenders of Reconciliation; how He woos **you** to receive Mercy, how He beseeches you to be happy, how He intreats you to be saved, to accept of Him and of Heaven, of Grace and of Glory. So that if you look to the Streamings out of the Fountain; you see they all carry with them the Riches of Grace.

THIRDLY, Consider the several *Conveyances* of it; how **GOD** diffuses this his Goodness to thy Soul; and thou shalt see how thou hast lived upon the Expences of Free Grace all thy Days. And for this, observe how He tun'd all Circumstances in a sweet and harmonious Way, so as they did all sweetly agree in thy Happiness; and how all providential Passages did join for thee, and *work together* for thy Good: As

1. 'TWAS out of the Riches of Free Grace, that He planted thee in a Place of Light, when He shut up and imprisoned the rest of the World in palpable Darkness. The Gospel shines out but upon a little Spot of Ground which **GOD** hath enclos'd for Himself, and stiles it his Garden. *Paul* plants it, and *Apollos* waters it, and He Himself gives it an Increase: The rest of the World lies like a barren and desolate Wilderness, the Word of the Gospel never dropt upon it; nothing but Briers and Thorns fit for the Fire. Now, how fell thy Lot in so fair a Ground; and who is it that gives thee so goodly an Heritage? Who is it that shines thus upon thy Tabernacle, and fixes it in a Land that flows with Milk and Honey? Give
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a Reason if thou canst, why thou wert not plac'd in some obscure Corner of *America*, and left only to the weak and glimmering Light of Nature? Tell me who that was that open'd for thee so many Wells of Salvation, and feasted thee with all those spiritual Dainties in Variety of Ordinances? I would fain know who that was that crush'd the Honey-comb on Purpose, that it might drop upon thy Soul? Tell me, if thou canst, who that was that bespoke a Place for thee in the Church, among the Assembly of the Saints? Hath God dealt so with every Nation, or have the Heathen Knowledge of this Law? Ascribe this then to Free Grace.

2. THAT Salvation should wait upon thee so long, and when thou hadst repuls'd so many rich Offers of Grace and Mercy; that still it should be importunate with thee: If Mercy had knock'd once or twice, if it had then bid thy Soul farewell, thou hadst dropt into Hell irrecoverably. How many Years hath Grace stood at the Door, and begg'd for Admission, and thou hast not so much as bid it welcome? Grace follows thee and pursues thee, and will not let thee go 'till thou hast a Blessing. Would any Friend have given thee so many Invitations after thou hast rejected them? That that Spirit which thou hast so much griev'd, and so often vex'd, should still breath upon thee, and follow thee with secret Whisperings, and gentle Solicitations to entice and allure thee to Goodness; What can'st thou call this, but Free Grace?

3. CONSIDER in what State thou wert all the While; an Enemy, a Rebel, studying how to be damn'd; galloping to Hell and Destruction with full Career, a Scholar's Pace: Who was it now that stopt thee in thy Course? Who bridled in the proud

proud Waves and said, *Hither ye shall go, and no further?* Saul when he is breathing out of Slaughters, and making Havock of the Church, even then he becomes a *Paul*. When the Soul is even ripe for Judgment, then Mercy shines out upon it. And that which would seem the most reasonable Time for Vengeance, is made a blessed Opportunity of shewing Mercy.

4. CONSIDER the efficacious Work of Grace; it is not enough to provide the Means, but he must strongly apply them; unless the Arm of the LORD be revealed, there's none will believe our Report. It may be thou camest occasionally to hear a Sermon; well, GOD hath the two-edged Sword in his own Hand; He brandish'd the glittering Sword, He fought against thee, He wounded thee, and frighted thee out of thy Sins. Thou wentest away with Groans, and Sighs, and Tears; like a Hart stuck with an Arrow, panting and breathing, and fain wouldst have some Refreshment; ere long, He met with a faithful Messenger, and sent thee some Balm from *Gilead*; He began to let in some of his Love to thy Soul, and to cheer thee with Gospel-Cordials; and were not they all bought with the Riches of Grace? Or it may be, thou camest into a Church with a Mind to smile at Religion, to laugh at Goodness, to mock at Piety; or to guess the best, thou camest for Flowers and not for Fruit. Thou camest for a Bait, but met'st with an Hook, and 'twas happy for thee that thou wert so caught: Thou thought'st only to see the flourishing of the Sword, but thou felt'st the Edge of it, and 'twas well for thee that thou wert so wounded.

5. REMEMBER the Manner how He thus wrought upon thee; it may be 'twas with softer
and

and gentler Impressions, in a winning, in a melting Way; He drew thee with the Cords of a Man, and sweetly dissolved thy stony Heart. 'Tis true, the Law had its Work, and struck thee with the flaming Edge of a Curse, but the Gospel presently brought Oil, and poured it into the wounded Spirit. The Love of *Christ* constrain'd thee to Obedience: And was it not Mercy to be dealt withal in so mild a Way? Well, but what if thou wert a more knotty and obdurate Piece, and 'twas not a little Matter would tame thy unruly Spirit? God came in a more victorious and triumphant Manner, and led Captivity Captive, when He gave Gifts unto thy Soul. He was fain to batter down strong Holds, and bring to the Ground towering Imaginations. Thou hadst a rocky and flinty Spirit, and was not his Word an Hammer? Did not He take it into his own Hand? He smote the stony Rock indeed, so as the Waters gushed out: Well, and had He no Bowels all the While? Was it not Abundance of Mercy to take Pains with such an obstinate Sinner? Refer it you to what you will; we will put it under the Head of Free Grace.

6. THINK upon those Mountains of Opposition that were beaten down, when this goodly Fabrick of the Temple went up with the Shoutings and Acclamations of Free Grace. The strong Man was dispossess'd, all the Plots and Stratagems of *Satan* were frustrated. God crush'd his Designs, and blasted his Enterprizes, and broke his Snares, and rescu'd thee out of the Paw of the Lion. 'Twas much Love and Grace to set a silly Bird out of the Snare, to ransom a poor Captive, to break the Chain, and beat off the Irons, to disentangle a Soul, and set it at Liberty. And then He arm'd thee against the Disgraces and Frowns,

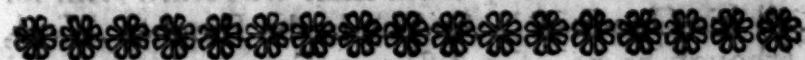
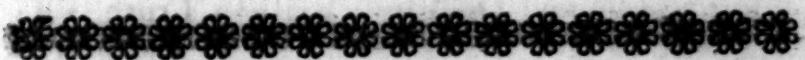
and fortified thee against the Smiles and Blandishments of thee World, and carried thee against the Stream of Examples, which all ran another Way; Grace hid thy Soul under the Shadow of its Wings.

THIS Truth is full of Use: Richly laden with Fruit, if we had Time to gather it; I'll but point at it.

USE. Let none dare to abuse the Grace of GOD; to still malignant and venomous Consequences out of so sweet and flowery a Truth. There is none but love to hear of Grace; this is a soft and downy Doctrine, a silken Truth: 'Tis a gentle Breath that fans the Soul, and gives it sweet Refreshment. 'Tis a pleasant Thing to sit under the Shadow of Grace, and see GOD's Goodness streaming out before thee! But take Heed whoe'er thou art, of turning this Grace of GOD into Wantonness; and know, that 'tis Free Grace in another Sense too, GOD may take it away when He pleaseth, thou knowest not which is the last Offer: Believe it, he that neglects this very present Offer, ventures Eternity. And know withal, that as there are more liberal Aspersions of Grace in Time of the Gospel, so there are larger Vials of Wrath too. Grace abused turns to Fury. What, to sin against GOD, because He is good? Therefore to offend Him, because He is merciful? To multiply Iniquities, because He blots them out for his own Sake? To kick against Bowels of Mercy, and to rebel against the golden Scepter, when 'tis stretched out? Truly this will be the very Sting of Hell, this will heat the Furnace seven Times hotter; 'twill teach the Worm that never dies to gnaw more cruelly, and

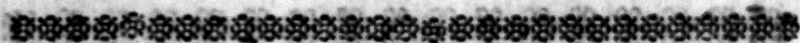
and put new Stings into the eternal Scorpions ; 'twill prepare flaming Ingredients for the Cup of Wrath, and fill it up to the very Brim. Oh how fain wouldst thou then change Places in Hell with a Turk, or an Infidel, and be ambitious of ordinary Damnation ! But truly there is no stronger Argument against Sin to an ingenuous Spirit than Free Grace. Because GOD is so prone to pardon, therefore the Soul is so loath to displease.

CHILD'S RETURN.





THE
CHILD'S RETURN.



PROV. xxiii. 26.

My Son, give me thine Heart.

THERE have been such noble, and generous Spirits in some of the People of GOD, that they have been frequent in such Enquiries as these: What shall we render the LORD for all his Mercies? And, what shall we return Him for all his Goodness? And he in the Prophet *Micah*, (though he be of a different Temper from these) yet seemeth to be very solicitous, and desirous to know what he should bring unto the LORD. For thus you may hear him speak in the Sixth of *Micah*: *Wherewithall* (says he) *shall I appear before the LORD? Will the LORD be pleased with Thousands of Rams, &c.* No, saith the Prophet; *He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good, and what doth the*

the LORD require of thee, but that thou should'st give Him thine Heart, and that thou should'st love the LORD thy GOD with all thine Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength? And therefore He here asks it of thee: *My Son, give Me thine Heart.*

THESE Words are spoken by *Solomon*, but not in his own Name. It had been too much for *Solomon* to have askt it for himself. It doth not become the Mouth of any Creature to ask the Heart to itself. But *Solomon* speaks it in the Name of Wisdom, and so in the Name of GOD Himself, the eternal Fountain of Wisdom. It is He that calls unto the Sons of Men, and bids them give Him their Hearts.

AND tho' I know that the *Hebrew* Idiom sometimes by giving the Heart, doth imply no more, than the serious Consideration, and pondering of a Thing, the laying it to Heart, as we use to speak; yet I shall take the Words here in a fuller Sense, as the Heart in a special Manner is due unto GOD.

Now as in proverbial Speeches there useth to be, so it is here. There is Abundance of rich Variety, a great deal of Treasure lock'd up in a few Words; we will open some of them to you. And,

I. FOR the Relation, my Son. Five Things are very considerable.

I. HE speaks here to a *Son*, and not to a *Stranger*. No Wonder that Strangers give not the Heart unto GOD; no Wonder that a *Pagan* gives not the Heart unto GOD. Such as are Aliens from the Common-wealth of *Israel*, and Strangers to the Covenant of Grace. Such as are at a great Distance from Him; nay, that live without GOD in the

World; such as lie like the dry Heath, and the barren Wilderness, the Word of the Kingdom never dropt upon them: But thou art a *Son* in near Relation to Him: He reveals his Mind to thee; He manifests, and displays Himself to thee; He makes his Goodness pass before thee. Thou hast the continual Droppings of the Word upon thee; his Prophets are sent to thee early and late; thou hast the happy Sun-shine of his Presence with thee, enough to warm, and soften a stony Heart; and out of such Stones to raise up Children unto *Abraham*. Though an *Indian*, tho' an *American* do not give the Heart unto GOD; yet a Christian should. Though a Stranger do not give Him the Heart; yet a *Son* should.

2. A SON, and not an *Enemy*. GOD doth not expect the Hearts of Enemies; such as are in open Hostility, and Opposition against Him; such as are said to be *Haters of Him, and hated by Him*; such as bid Him depart from them, for they do not desire the Knowledge of his Ways: He doth not look for the Hearts of these. He doth indeed many Times turn the Heart of an Enemy, meet the Heart of a *Saul*, while he is breathing out Slaughters against the Church; but whilst He is in a State of Enmity, He doth not look for the Heart from them. He will not accept of a Traitor's Heart. But thou art reconciled to Him, so far from being an Enemy, that thou art a *Son*. Thou hast all Expressions of Love from Him; and thine Heart it is expected by Him, and it will be accepted of Him. Though an Enemy do not give the Heart unto GOD, yet a *Son* should.

3. A SON, and not a *Slave*. A Slave doth a great deal of Work and Drudgery; but he doth not give

give the Heart all the while. He works out of Fear, he looks upon it as a Task, as a Burden; he watches an Opportunity for shaking off the Yoke. But Religion doth not come thus to enslave Men, but to enlarge them, to ennoble them; it comes to beat off the Chains and Fetters, to beat open the Prison Doors; it brings a perpetual Jubilee, a perpetual Triumph along with it. Religion floweth out of filial Principles: *My Son*, hear my Words; and *my Son*, give me thine Heart. If the *Son* make you free, why then you are free indeed; and if you be free like *Sons*, why then you are free indeed. The Gospel brings with it a filial Liberty, a filial Assurance; an Evangelical Yoke is a soft and pleasant Yoke; a Saviour's Burden is *onus alarum*, it does no more load the Soul, than Wings do a Bird, which advance and promote its Flight toward Heaven. In Sin there is nothing but Slavery; in Religion there is perfect Liberty. Though a Slave do not give the Heart unto GOD, yet a *Son* should.

4. A SON: Thou wert not always so. There was a Time when ye were Sons of Wrath, as well as others; Children of Disobedience, as well as others. Adopted Sons were not always Sons; now the Sons of GOD are Sons by Adoption. And let it suffice you (saith the Apostle) that in those former Times of your Ignorance, of your Folly and Vanity, you gave your Hearts unto other Objects; but now you are come into a State of Son-ship, now that ye have this great and honourable Gospel-privilege, to be called a Son of GOD; now withdraw your Hearts from former Objects. Let them not be bestowed upon former Vanities, do not debase them so much; fix them only upon your GOD. Though once thou didst not give thy Heart unto GOD, yet now thou art a *Son*, thou shouldst.

5. A SON; and so in way of mutual Affection, thou art to give the Heart unto Him. He hath given thee his Love, and his Heart, and his Bowels are towards thee; and wilt not thou return some Affection to Him again? Is there the Love of a Father in Him, and shall not there be the Obedience of a Son in thee? Is there a Flame in Him, and is there no Spark in thee? Is there no reflecting of a Sun-beam? Is there no repairing of the Streams into the Ocean? As *Bathsheba* speaks affectionately to her Son *Solomon*: *What my Son? and what the Son of my Womb? and what the Son of my Vows? Wilt thou give thy Strength unto Women?* So here. What my Son? and what the Son of my Loves? and what the Son of my Hopes? Wilt thou give thine Heart unto another? Wilt thou give thy Strength unto a Creature? *καὶ οὐ τίμιον*; wilt thou thus dishonour and provoke thy GOD? If Love will not draw thee, what will? And if a preventing Love will not prevail upon thee, what Love will? And if GOD have not the Hearts of Sons, where shall He have any Hearts to praise Him? Who will admire Him, and adore Him, if his Sons will not? And then He hath given thee his only Son; He hath given thee a Saviour, that hath given his Heart to thee, that hath given his Life for thee, that had his Heart pierced through for thy Sake; and is there no attractive Power in all this? That is the fifth Thing, thou art a Son, and so in way of Gratitude, and mutual Affection thou art to give thine Heart to Him.

II. THE Manner of yielding up the Heart unto GOD, is here exprest by way of giving; which includes several Things in it.

1. GIVE it *Cheerfully*. GOD loves a cheerful Giver. Religion should be full of Alacrity; it doth not come to extort the Heart, to hale Men to Obedience,

dience, but to lead them by a sweet and easy Way. It doth not storm the Castle, but hath it fairly yielded up upon Terms of Agreement. That Work of Grace in Conversion, doth indeed overpower the Hearts of Men; but it is by making them willing, not by drawing them whilst they are unwilling; but it takes away that Reluctancy that is in the Hearts of Men, and thus compells them to come in. What freer than a Gift? Now the Heart it is to be given unto GOD. The Will hath never more Freedom, than when it moves towards GOD. And those heavenly Duties, and spiritual Performances are to flow freely from the Soul, like those voluntary Drops, that come sweeting from the Honey-comb of its own Accord, without any pressing, without any crushing at all. It is only the Dregs of Obedience, that comes forth with squeezing, and wringing. The better any Thing is, the more freely doth it diffuse itself. There should be no need now of binding the Sacrifice with Cords unto the Altar, unless it be with the Cords of Love; those soft and silken Knots of Affection, Cheerfulness puts a Lustre upon Religion, and makes it amiable, even in the Eyes of the World. And truly I cannot tell how any one can give the Heart to GOD, unless he serve Him with Alacrity.

2. *GIVE it presently.* Give it Him now, He calls for it. Now that it is called *To-day harden not your Hearts*. Give Him a tender Heart. Now give thine Heart to be framed and fashioned by Him; to be stamp'd and sealed by Him. Give Him the First-fruits of thy Time, the First-fruits of thy Strength: He is the *Alpha*, the First of Beings; and therefore whatsoever hath any Priority, and Superiority belongs to Him. And truly Grace is very sweet, and pleasant in the Bud. How pleasant is it to see a Virgin-light, a Morning-light of Education shining out

out upon the Soul, and in some Measure preparing, and pre-disposing the Heart for the Ways of GOD? O this is an happy Prejudice, an early Prepossession of the Soul. And this is that which the wise Man here intends, when he speaks to a Son, to one of tender Age. And do but consider it; can you give your Heart unto GOD too soon? Why should'st thou defer thine own Welfare? or is it comely then to offer thine Heart unto GOD, when thou canst give it to none else? Give it presently.

3. *Give it, do not lend it only.* In giving, there is an Alteration of the Propriety, which is not in lending. When thou hast given thine Heart unto GOD, thou art no longer thine own. There are some that will *lend* their Hearts unto GOD, upon some special Occasions, for an Hour at a Sermon, for a little while in Prayer; lend it Him upon a LORD'S Day, upon a Day of Humiliation, and then call for the Heart again, and bestow it upon their Lusts. But so great a Majesty will not borrow of Creatures; He will not receive Hearts, unless they be wholly given to Him.

4. *GIVE it, do not sell it.* 'Tis very fordid, and odious to be Hirelings in Religion. They sell their Hearts unto GOD, that serve Him only for By-ends. This is a Gift with an Hook in it; they give somewhat, that they may catch more. They sell their Hearts unto GOD for some temporal Ends. Hence it is, that the Church hath so many Friends in prosperous Days. There are many that sell their Hearts unto GOD. You know in the Gospel, there were some that followed *Christ* for the Loaves, and not for the Miracles. There are some that love the Additionals in Religion, more than the Principals. Victories are the only Arguments to convince some of the Rightness of a Cause. Esteem of worldly Advan-

Advantages make many Men take a little Tincture of Religion, who otherwise would not have so much as a Shew of it. Whereas Religion should be loved for her Beauty, and not for her Dowry. God should be loved for those Excellencies that are in Himself; for those Treasures of Goodness and Wisdom, that are stored up in his own glorious Essence. Thou should'st love Him, though He did not love thee again. Why should'st not thou love a Thing truly amiable, though thou hast no Benefit by it? For thy Happiness is but an inferiour Thing, and is not to have so much of thine Heart as he is to have. Thou art only to love thyself, as thou art somewhat of Him; thou art to love Heaven, as the Enjoyment of Him; thou art to love the Gospel, as the great Expression of his Love, and all the Promises of the Right-hand, and the Left, as the various Manifestations of his Goodness. Thou art first to give thine Heart unto thy God, and then to other Things in such Measure, as they are subordinate to Him.

5. GIVE thine Heart, do not keep it to thyself. Wouldst thou be trusted with thine own Heart? Wouldst thou be left to thine own deceitful Spirit? The best upon Earth may very well put up that Prayer; *LORD deliver me from myself!* Lay up thine Heart in the Hand of a Saviour. Leave it there as a sacred *Depositum*. Canst thou lay up thy Jewel in a safer Cabinet? Let Him keep thine Heart by his mighty Power through Faith unto Salvation.

6. GIVE it. GOD is pleased to call that a Gift, which is indeed a Debt: All thou art, canst, and hast is due to Him, yet that thy Heart may come in a Way of Freeness, and that He may shew thee, how

how it is accepted by Him; He calls it a Gift, such a Gift as does enrich the Giver, not the Receiver. It is an Honour to thee, it is no Benefit to Him; his Glory doth not shine with borrowed Beams: It is neither in the Power of a Creature to eclipse the Brightness of his Crown, nor to add one Spark to it. If thou doest Ill, what Hurt hath He by it? Or if thou doest well, what Good flows unto Him; any otherwise than as He hath joined his own Glory, and the Welfare of his People together? Thy Goodness may profit thyself, and it may extend to Men like thyself, but it can make no Additions to to that which is already perfect. Thy Heart is due to Him, and it is thine Honour that thou mayst give it Him.

III. To whom the Heart must be given.

1. NOT to any created Being. No Creature can be a Centre for the Heart to fix in. The Heart was not made for any Creature, nor proportioned to it. *Wilt thou set thy Heart upon that which is not? Wilt thou give thine Heart to Vanity and Vexation? Wilt thou set thine Heart upon that which hath Wings, and can fly away when it listeth? Riches have Wings; Honours and Pleasures have Wings, all Creature Comforts have Wings, and can fly away when they please. And therefore;*

2. GIVE not thine Heart to the World: Give it not to the Smiles and Blandishments of the World: Let it not be broken with the Frowns and Injuries of the World: *Let not your Hearts be troubled, (saith Christ) for I have overcome the World.* And be not over careful for the Things of the World; *μη μεριμνήετε*, a Pythagorean would render it, *Cor ne edite.*

3. GIVE

3. GIVE it not to *Satan*. The Devil that old Serpent would fain be winding and insinuating into Hearts; he seeks them, and desires, and would fain by any Means obtain them; and we see how many give their Hearts unto him. But what, wilt thou give thy Darling to the Lyon? Wilt thou give thy Turtle as a Prey to the Devourer? Wilt thou give thine Heart to the Destroyer?

4. GIVE it not to Sin. Give it not to a *Dalilah*. Give not thine Heart to that which will weaken it; to that that will defile it, to that that will wound it, to that that will sting and disquiet it. O! keep it calm and serene, keep it pure and unspotted, keep it in its proper Freedom and Enlargement.

IV. WE come to consider the Gift itself, what it is that is to be given unto GOD: *The Heart*.

1. NOT thine *outward Man only*, not thy Body only. GOD dwells not so much in these Temples made with Hands, as in broken and contrite Spirits. For He Himself is a Spirit, and the Father of Spirits, and He will be served in Spirit and Truth. He does not ask for a Shell, but for a Kernel: He does not ask for a Casket, but for a Jewel. Give Him the Kernel, give Him the Jewel, give Him thine Heart. No Question, but the Body also is to be presented to Him, but it is no otherwise accepted of Him, than as it is animated, and enlivened by an obedient Heart. For how else can it be a reasonable Service, as the Apostle there calls it? Give Me thine Heart; (1.) Not thine Ear only; though it be very commendable to encline an Ear unto Wisdom, and to receive the gracious Words that flow from its Mouth; yet the Ear is only to be a Gate, and Entrance to let it into the Heart, and to *bear* in Scripture Language, is to obey. The Word of GOD must not hang like a Jewel only in the Ear, but it

must be cabined, and locked up in the Heart as its safest Repository. (2.) Not thy Tongue only; Religion is not only to warm thy Mouth, but 'tis to melt the Heart; it does indeed season the Discourse, so as savoury Words come out of such a Mouth. It does set a Watch before the Lips, and bridle that same unruly Evil; but can you think that it reacheth no farther than thus? Can you think that Religion dwells here? Is it only a Lip-labour, only a Matter of Discourse? Nay, are there not many that draw near unto GOD with there Lips, and yet their Hearts are far from Him? (3.) Not thine Head only: Religion is not a mere Notion, it does not consist only in Speculatives. You see many Times that Men of the vastest Intellectuals, are most defective in Practicals. Who of the Heads of the World believed in *Christ*? Who of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* believed in Him? There may be precious pearly Truths in a venomous Head. And indeed the Head can never be given unto GOD, 'till the Heart be given Him also.

2. THE Heart; not *Appearances* only: Not a Surface, not a Colour, not a Shadow only; but a Reality. And this is the Weakness of Superstition, it gives him only a Compliment, a Ceremony. They tell Him they are his Servants; What more ordinary Compliment in the Mouths of Men? They give Him outward Adoration; they bow the Knee to *Christ*, and so did they that crucified Him: What do you do more then they? And this is the Vanity of Popery, it does not give GOD the Heart. That spiritual *Jezabel* gives Him only a painted Face, she does not give Him the Heart. She is clothed in Scarlet, but she embraces a Dunghill. She puts on an outward Bravery, but within there is nothing but Rottenness. But the Spouse of *Christ* is all glorious within. When the Shadows were multi-

multiplied, GOD called for the Heart then, in the Times of the Law; much more now in the Times of the Gospel.

3. THE Heart, *the whole Heart*. Not a Piece of it, not a Corner of it only. The true Mother would not have the Child divided. GOD indeed loves a broken and a contrite Heart; but He won't accept of a divided Heart. This is that Royal Law, the great Commandment; *Thou shalt Love the LORD thy GOD with all thy Heart.*

BUT the Devil observes the other Rule; *Divide and Govern*: He would seem to be very moderate, to be content with a Piece of the Heart only; but 'tis because he knows by this Means he shall have all. For GOD won't have any of it unless He have it entire. And this is one great Happiness, that comes by Religion; the Heart is thus united, and fixt upon one supreme Object. Lusts divide the Heart, and distract it. The Soul does as it were, bite at two Baits at once, and is caught with two several Hooks; this pulls that Way, and that pulls another Way. Pride calls for this Thing; but Covetousness forbids it; which must needs breed a great Confusion, and Tumult in the Soul. But when the Heart is given unto GOD, and yields to his Scepter, then other Lords shall no longer Rule over it. When a Saviour comes into the Soul, the Winds, and the Storms, and the Waves obey Him.

4. GIVE thine Heart; that is, all the Powers and Faculties of thy Soul. Give Him thine Understanding; set open the Windows of thy Soul, for the entertaining of such Light as shines from Heaven. Give thine Understanding to be enformed by Him, to be captivated by Him: Give it as Wax to the Seal, to receive such Stamps and Impressions as

He is pleased to put upon it. Give Him thy Will, that which glories so much in its own Liberty, let it be subject to Him. Give Him thine Affections, those Ebbings and Flowings of the Heart: Let thy Joy be in Him, let thy Trust and Confidence be upon Him, *Let all that is within thee, bless his holy Name.*

AND thus we have run over the Words in a Way of Explication, and we shall give you the Sum of all in one Observation,—That *the Heart is to be consecrated unto GOD.*

I. BECAUSE 'tis due to Him. Look upon the Heart, see whose Image and Superscription it hath; if the Image of GOD be upon it, (as sure you cannot but see that, though it be much defaced) *Give then unto GOD, the Things that are GOD's.* If thou wilt not give Men their Due, yet sure thou wilt not with-hold from Him his Due. It is due unto Him upon a four-fold Account.

1. As He is the *Maker* of Hearts; the Creator of them. All the Strength of created Beings is due to Him; and the Nobler any Being is, the more strongly it is engaged to Him, for it hath received the more from Him. Now the Heart of Man is a chief Piece of GOD's Wormanhip: 'Tis Due to Him, as it was made by Him, and 'twas made upon this Condition, that it should return to Him.

2. As He is the LORD, and *Ruler* of Hearts; his Throne is in the Hearts of Men, and 'tis He only that have Dominion and Sovereignty over them. It is the great Usurpation of Popery, that it would Tyrannize over the Hearts of Men. That proud *Antichrist* would sit in the Temple of GOD; but there is none LORD of the Conscience, but GOD alone. And He can frame them, and fashion them,

them, and dispose of them as He pleaseth. He can rule those Hearts that are most large, and unlimited, and unrestrained. The Hearts of Princes He can wind them, which Way He will, even as the Rivers of Waters.

3. As He is the *Judge* and Searcher of Hearts. We only can see the outward Surface, and Appearance of Things: But GOD He sees into the Depth and Bottom of Things. We look only to the Fruit and Branches, but He searcheth to the Root and Foundation.

4. As He is the Spouse of the Heart: 'Tis the Prophet *Hosea's* Expression, *I have espoused thee to myself in Mercy, and Goodness, and Faithfulness*; so that it is an Adulterous Heart that now goes after Creatures: *Ye Adulterers*, (says the Apostle) *know ye not that the Love of the World is Enmity against GOD?* And the Apostle speaks of presenting Virgin Hearts unto *Christ*.

II. 'Tis very pleasing and acceptable to Him..
For,

1. HE asks it of thee. He knocks at the Door, He woos thine Heart, and invites it to Himself; and what is the whole Mind of the Gospel, but to draw Hearts unto GOD with all Arguments of Love?

2. 'Tis all thou canst give Him. Now saith the Apostle, He accepts according to what a Man hath. Thou thus castest all thou hast into the Treasury; and if thou hadst more, thou wouldst give it Him.

3. 'Tis a comprehensive Gift, and contains many other Things in it. As the Apostle says, *He having given thee his Son; how shall He not with*

Him give thee all Things also? This is the Spring of Motion, that sets the Wheels on Working. When this Royal Fort is taken, all the Rest will be yielded up presently. When the *Heart indites a good Matter*, then the *Tongue will be like the Pen of a ready Writer*; then thy *Glory will awake*, thy *Tongue will praise his Name*, and encourage others in his Ways; then thy *Bowels will be enlarged*, and thy *Hands open to the Necessity of the Saints*; then there will be a *Covenant made with the Eyes*, and a *Watch set before the Door of thy Lips*; then thy *Feet will run to the Place where his Honour dwelleth*, and all the *Members of the Body will become Instruments of Righteousness unto Holiness*. Which shews the *Vanity of those ignorant Ones*, who thank GOD, though they cannot express themselves, yet their *Hearts are as good as the best*; tho' there be not one *Beam of Light*, nor one *Spark of Love* in them; whereas a good Heart never wanted for some real Expression. They that can shew a good Heart no otherwise than by saying they have a good one; desire us not to believe them.

THEY that offered up Sacrifices were wont to judge of them most according to the Inwards, and GOD doth thus judge of Performances. For,

1. THE least Performances, if the Heart accompany them, are accepted by Him. That *Persian Monarch* was famous for accepting a little Water from the Hand of a loving Subject: And doth not *Christ* accept of the same? *He that shall give a Cup of cold Water to a Disciple, in the Name of a Disciple, shall not lose his Reward*. What though thou canst not bring costly Sacrifices? Bring thy *Turtle-Doves*, and young *Pigeons*; and these shall be accepted by Him. Thou hast no *Gold*, nor *Jewels*; thou canst not bring any *Silk*, and *Purple* to the
Taber-

Tabernacle; yet bring thy Goats Hair, and Badgers Skins, and these shall be welcome to Him. Thou canst not bring Cedars to the Temple, thou canst not polish, and carve, and guild the Temple; Well, but canst thou be any Ways serviceable to it? Even that shall be rewarded by Him. A few broken Sighs, if they arise from a broken Heart; are very potent, and rhetorical. A few Tears, if they flow from this Fountain, are presently bottled up; He puts your Tears in his Bottle.

2. GOD accepts of your Intentions, if they flow from a pure Heart, though they be blasted in the Bud, though they never come to the Birth.

GOD judgeth of the Soul's Complexion by those inward Productions, though Men judge only by outward Expressions. That two edged Sword of GOD doth thus pierce to the Marrow, to the very Intentions of the Heart. The Law of GOD reacheth Intentions, as our Saviour in those heavenly Sermons of his upon the Mount doth Spiritualize it. And GOD doth in especial Manner punish naked Intentions, because Men cannot punish them.

3. WHEN the Heart is upright: Though there be Irregularities, yet they are passed by. No doubt but *Abraham's* Faith staggered, when he was put to an Equivocation, and we cannot easily excuse *Jacob's* Supplantings, and *Rebekah's* Deceits. There was so much Frailty, and Imperfection in all these, as did plainly spot, and blemish them; and yet the Heart being right, GOD accepts of that, and covers the rest with his pardoning Love.

4. HENCE it is, that GOD looks not to the outward Lump, and Heap of Performances, but looks to the Manner of them, and the Spirit from whence they

they come. This might spare many a Papist his Beads, which he thinks so necessary for the Numbering of his Prayers.

THE glimmering Light of Nature, Taught the Heathen thus much, that the Gods did not expect any Benefit from them, but only a grateful Acknowledgement. And this is the Reason they give, why they consecrated to their Gods barren Trees, which indeed were Green, and Flourishing, but brought forth no Fruit at all, as the *Laurel*, to *Apollo*; the *Ivy*, to *Bacchus*; the *Mirtle*, to *Venus*; the *Oak*, to *Jupiter*; the *Pine*, to *Neptune*; the *Poplar*, to *Hercules*; and so in many of the rest. And they will tell you, that the Gods did not look for any Fruit from their Worshippers, but looked for Homage, Obedience, and Thankfulness. And it is that which Ingenuity teacheth Men, not to look to the Value of a Gift; but to the Affection of him that gives it. Away then with those vain ones, that think to bribe Heaven with their Gifts, and to stop the Mouth of Justice with their Performances. All Duties and Performances they are but to comment, and paraphrase upon the Heart. In Prayer, GOD expects a flaming Heart; in Hearing of the Word, He looks for a melted Heart; in Fasting, rend your Hearts, and not your Cloaths; in Thanksgiving, He listens to hear whether ye make Melody in your Hearts. Religion doth spiritualize Performances, and doth shell them, and take the Kernel; it doth extract the Spirits, and Quintessence of them.

5. HENCE it is, that without this, the most pompous Performances are rejected. A Sacrifice without an Heart is an Abomination to Him. *I hate your Burnt-offerings, my Soul loaths your solemn Assemblies; bring Me no more vain Oblations: A*
corrupt

corrupt Heart soils every Ordinance, it stains and discolours every Duty, it envenoms every Mercy. If such a one Pray, 'tis esteemed Howling; if He Mourn, 'tis hanging down the Head like a Bulrush; if he Sacrifice, 'tis cutting off a Dog's Neck; if he Rejoyce, 'tis but a Blaze, a Crackling of Thorns under the Pot.

6. IN Heaven, when outward Performances shall vanish, yet then GOD shall have thine Heart, and thou shalt have his Face; the well-beloved shall be thine, and thou shalt be his. When Preaching shall cease, and Prayer shall cease, when Sacraments shall disappear, yet then thy naked Heart shall be offered unto GOD; it shall twine about the chiefest Good, and by a near, and immediate Union, shall enjoy it for ever.

III. *THE Heart* is to be given unto GOD, because thou hast promised it Him. Remember that primitive, and original Vow in Baptism. GOD then may take Possession of the Heart, if He please; for He hath the Key of all Hearts; He hath the Key of an Infant's Heart, and can open it if He please. But however, there is an Engagement upon thee, by this, to give Him thine Heart. And sure there are few, but sometime or other, have given Him several other Promises of their Hearts. Didst thou never offer thine Heart unto Him in a Storm? In a Judgment? In a Sicknes? Well then, withal remember that GOD takes no Pleasure in Fools, that make Vows, and break them. His Promises to thee are sure, why should thine be deceitful?

IV. *GIVE* thine Heart unto Him, that He may make it better. It may be thou hast a flinty Heart, give it to Him, and He will melt it and dissolve it. It may be thou hast a barren, and unprofitable Heart; give

give it to Him, and He will make it fruitful; He will bid it increase, and multiply. It may be thou hast an unquiet, and discomposed Heart; give it Him, and He will tune it. It may be thou hast a narrow, and contracted Heart; give it to Him, and He will enlarge it. It may be thou hast a drossy, and corrupt Heart, give it to Him, and He will purify and refine it.

V. GIVE it Him, that He may make it happy, that He may fill it with his Love, that He may satisfy it with Himself, that He may seal it with his Spirit. It hath toiled already sufficiently, and wearied itself among Vanities; it hath gone from Flower to Flower, and can extract nothing but Bitterness; and still Desire opens its wide Mouth, and cries aloud, Give, give. Go then to the Fountain, to the Ocean, and there fill thyself. Dost thou think thou canst suck any Sweetness from the Breast of a Creature? No, but go to the Fulness of a Deity, and then stretch thy Desires to the utmost Compass; widen thine Heart as much as thou canst, yet there will be enough to make thee run over with Happiness.

THAT'S the first Thing, why the Heart must be given to GOD? We'll consider in the next Place, when the Heart may be said to be given to Him.

(I.) WHEN thou actest out of a Principle of Love toward Him. What's Love, but a Giving of the Heart? As *Dalilah* speaks to *Sampson*; *How canst thou say thou lovest me, when thine Heart is not with me?* Where there is mutual Love, there's a mutual Exchange of Hearts. GOD loves Himself in thee, and thou findest thyself in GOD. His Thoughts are for thy Well-fare, and thy Thoughts are for his Glory. In Love there is a mixing and blending

blending of Beings; it knits, and weaves Souls together.

(2.) THEN thine Heart is given unto GOD, when thou dost act out of Sincerity, when thou art an *Israelite* without Guile. This is that Evangelical Allowance, which is put into the Ballance of the Sanctuary, so as a *Christian* is not found too light. Those Spots which thou findest in thine own Heart, thou must wash them out in the Blood of the Lamb; thou must whiten thine Heart in that *Fountain*, which is set open for the House of David, and for the Inhabitants of Jerusalem, for Sin, and for Uncleaness. If thou beest sincere, and cordial, and faithful with GOD, then thine Heart is given to Him.

(3.) THEN thou dost give thine Heart unto GOD, when thou dost fully comply with Him in those glorious Ends, in those great Interests and Designs which He doth propound to Himself; when thou dost submit thy Will unto his, and conform thy Desires unto his; when thou dost wholly resign up thyself unto Him, and sweetly close with his Providence, though never so mysterious and unsearchable: When thou dost pluck out thy right Eye for Him, and cut off thy right Hand for Him; when thou thinkest not thy Life too dear for Him.

(4.) THEN thou dost give thine Heart unto GOD, when thou dost serve Him with Vigour. Luke-warm *Laodicea* could not give the Heart unto *Christ*. When *Ephesus* falls from her first Love, her Heart is unbended presently, Performances come dropping from her in a weak and languishing Manner. Whereas spiritual Productions should be strong and masculine, springing and rushing forth with a sacred Violence, as GOD's Love comes streaming to thee

thee with an irresistable Fulness. Thine Heart should boil up a good Matter, as the *Psalmist* speaks. But some are so cold and flat in Performances, that you would wonder where the Heart was all the while; and, to be sure, wherever it was, it was an Heart of Stone, a *Nabal's* Heart, an Heart sunk within them. Popery lays much Stress upon the Intention of the Priest, but the People in the mean Time may be as remiss as they please. But if they had but a Bible, or such a one as they could understand, they might turn to that same Place; *Cursed is every one that doth the Work of the LORD negligently.* Offer such blind and lame Sacrifices; offer them to thy Prince. Offer such imperfect Obedience to the Pope. See whether he will accept of it.

AND thus we have seen why the Heart must be given unto GOD, and when it is given to Him. We will now shut up all in a Word of Application.

1. SEE then how powerful Religion is, it commands the Heart, it seizeth upon the Vitals. Morality comes with a pruning Knife, and cuts off Sproutings; but Religion lays the Ax to the Root of the Tree. Morality looks that the Skin of the Apple be fair; but Religion searcheth to the very Core. Morality chides outward Exorbitancies; but Religion checks secret Inclinations. Or at the best in Morality there is but a Polishing, a Guilding, a Carving of the Heart; but in Religion there is a new Framing, a new Modeling; nay, a new Creating. That's the Power of Godliness; it changeth the Heart.

2. SEE also the Odiousness of an Hypocrite. He doth not give GOD the Heart; and yet will give any Thing else; and will seem to give that too. Treachery and Perfidiousness is that which is so much

much detested by Men, as that which cuts the Sinews of human Society: And though there be some that will practise it, yet there are scarce any that will in exprefs Terms patronize it. Now as Perfidiousness hinders Commerce and Intercourse with Men, so Hypocrisy must needs hinder Communion with GOD. Can you think that a painted Sepulchre is a fit Place for his Spirit to dwell in? This is that which *Christ* doth so much upbraid: Thou blind Pharisee, thou that never reflectest upon thine own Heart, thou that keepest a continual poring on the outside only, and lookest to the Painting, and Whiting, and Daubing of that; dost thou think thus to please the pure, and bright, and piercing Eye of Omniscience? Thou hast not the black Skin of the *Ethiopian*; thou hast not those eminent Spots of the *Leopard*; but thou hast the Plague of the Heart, thou hast the Leprosy within, and is not that more deadly and dangerous? The Heart of a Publican is far whiter than thine.

3. YET see the Security of a weak *Christian*; he hath an Heart as well as others, and he hath given that to his GOD. He hath a vital Principle, an immortal Principle within him. What tho' the sturdy Oakes of *Basan* be broken? What tho' the stately Cedars of *Lebanon* fall? What tho' the green Bay-Trees vanish and disappear? What tho' Men of vast Abilities, of rare Accomplishments, of fair Flourishes in Religion, what tho' these draw back from GOD? Yet a weak Vine may stand all this while leaning upon his Beloved laden with Fruit, chearing both GOD and Men; a bruised Reed may last all this while. The smoaking Flax may be kindled into so pure a Flame, as that it may outshine a blazing Professor. A Worm may consume *Jonah* his Gourd, but a Whale shall not consume *Jonah* himself. Out-

ward Profession may wither, but nothing shall separate a sincere Soul from his GOD.

4. SUCH as have not yet given their Hearts unto GOD, let them with-hold them no longer. Put up thy weak Desires, and pray Him to give thee such an Heart, as may return itself to Him. Doth GOD ask thine Heart of thee, and dost thou refuse to give it Him? What dost thou ask of him that he denies thee, if it be good for thee? And do but think how easily dost thou give thine Heart unto any other but thy GOD. When the World knocks, when Satan knocks, thou openest presently; nay, it may be before they knock; and must a Saviour only be excluded? Is there no Rhetorick in the Love of *Christ*? Is there nothing that can draw thine Heart to Him? Are all the Cords of Love too weak? Dost thou break them all? Will not the Influences of the Gospel soften thine Heart? Will not the Blood of a Saviour dissolve it? Will not importunate Woeings and Beseechings move thee? Out of what Rock wert thou hewn, O obdurate Soul? Doth a greater than *Moses* smite the Rock, and will not it gush out with Water? Dost thou say, thou canst not give it to Him? This Answer is ready for thee; but, if thou hadst a Will to give it Him, thou would'st have a Power to give it Him too. However, make some weak Endeavours; when He moves thee, then offer it to Him as well as thou canst, though but with a weak, though but with a trembling Hand, and his Hand will meet thine, and will presently take it of thee.

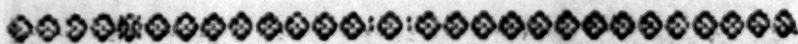
5. SUCH as have given their Hearts unto GOD, have Matter of Praise and Thankfulness. Bless thy GOD that would receive such a vain and contemptible Thing as thine Heart was, when first thou gavest

gavest it to Him. Was it not infinite Love to espouse such an Heart to Himself ; to beautify it and enrich it, and prepare it for his Love ; to guide it, and teach it, and rule it ; to steep it in all precious Sweetness ; to dilate it, that it might be more capable of his Love ; to set a Guard about it, and to keep it against the Subtilty and Vigilancy, the Malice and Fury of spiritual Enemies ? How canst thou enough admire the Greatness of this his Goodness ?





THE
PANTING SOUL.



P S A L. xlii. I.

*As the Hart panteth after the Water-
Brooks, so panteth my Soul after Thee,
O GOD!*

HERE's one of the sweet Strains of *David's* Harp; one of those bright and sparkling Expressions, which not only carry a Majesty with them, but even include a Deity: One of those holy and strong Ejaculations, with which he was wont (that I may allude to that of the Prophet *Esay's*) to take his Soul (that polished Shaft) out of the Quiver of the Body, and to dart it up to Heaven, the Place of his Treasure and Hope, and the Dwelling-Place of his GOD. And truly every Psalm may well say, as the Psalmist himself says, in the hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm, *I am admirably made, I am curiously wrought*: רַקֻּמָּתִי, so 'tis in the Original; I am wrought with a needle. There's a spiritual

ritual Embroidery, a most rare and sacred Needle-Work in every Psalm: They are all wrought by the Finger of the Spirit; and they are like the King's Daughter in the forty-fifth Psalm, *Their Cloathing is of wrought Gold, their Rayment of Needle-Work, and they are all glorious within.* We doubt not but that there's a most divine Emphasis in all Scripture-Eloquence, and every Jot and Tittle in holy Writ. As it has Eternity stamp't upon it, so it has a Majesty shining in it: But yet never did heavenly Eloquence ride in more solemn and triumphant Pomp, than in this Book of Psalms: As if the Voice had been here contrary to that in other Triumphs, *Remember thou art immortal.* And as for that prophane Politician, that said he found more Sweetness in *Pindar's Odes*, than in *David's Psalms*; he might as well have said, (if he had pleas'd) that he found more Fragrancy in noisom Weeds, than in the Rose of *Sharon*, or Lilly of the Vallies; that he found more Sweetness in a Dunghill, than in a Garden of Spices, than in an *Eden*, even a Garden of God. Yet the Word in the Original is appropriated to the panting Hart, and may seem to be borrowed from that very Noise which it makes in its Braying after the Water-Brooks. Now as for the Hart 'tis but a melancholy timorous Creature at the best, a panting Creature. But that which the Text chiefly aims at, is the Dryness of Temper in the Hart, which at some Times of the Year, (in Autumn chiefly) is very excessive, especially in those hot and dry Countries, and being usually in the Desert, doth more discover itself, by Reason of the Scarcity of Waters there. 'Tis likely here in the Text, 'tis meant of the Hart's panting, when 'tis chased by the Hunter, for the Quenching of its Thirst, as the following Words clearly intimate, *My Soul is a Thirst, &c. Hærat lateri lethalis arundo,*

the Arrows of the Pursuer stick fast in it, and the Venom thereof drinks up its Spirits. Why now Water-Brooks can hardly quench its Thirst, with *Behemoth* in *Job*, it can drink up Rivers, and sup up the Ocean at a Draught; there's a Combustion in its Bowels, nothing but Fire, Fire; Nature's on Fire, and would fain be quench'd, and those little Reliques of Strength that it has, it spends in panting after the Streams of Water. Thus does the Hart pant after the Water-Brooks, and thus did *David's* Soul; thus does every devout Soul pant after the Living GOD; and thus *ardently*. Religion is no Matter of Indifferency as vain Man would imagine. It requires the very Flower and Vigour of the Spirit, the Strength and Sinews of the Soul, the Prime and Top of Affections. It is no empty Wish nor languishing Endeavour, no still-born Prayer nor abortive Resolution will serve the Turn. He that's but almost a *Christian*, shall but almost be saved, and that will be the very *Emphasis* of Damnation, to have been within a Step to Heaven. But there is a Grace, a panting Grace, we know the Name of it, and that's all; 'tis called Zeal, a flaming Edge of Affection, and the ruddy Complexion of the Soul; which argues it sound, and shews it lovely. This is that that makes a *Christian* an holy Spark, a Son of the Coal, even of the burning Coal, that was fetch'd from the Altar. Nay, we need not go so low as this, a zealous *Christian* is an incarnate *Seraph*, what would I say more? He's just of his Saviour's Complexion, *white and ruddy, the Fairest of ten Thousand*. This was that, that set a Lustre upon those shining Rubies that adorned the noble Army of Martyrs. Their Soul was a Thirst even for the Living GOD; they entered into Heaven panting, and there they rest themselves to all Eternity. And yet there are a Generation in the World that are all for a Competency in Goodness, and

and are afraid of too much Holiness: A *Laodicean* Temper shall go under the Name of Moderation, and a reeling Neutrality shall be stiled Prudence and Discretion; What needs this Breathing and Panting? this Forwardness and Eagerness? this Vehemency and Violence in the Way of Religion? And they look upon such Expressions of Affection as this in the Text, as upon rhetorical Flourishes. *Jeremy* surely was strangely melancholy when he wisht his Head a Fountain, that he might weep Day and Night; and 'twas meer Folly in the Spouse in the *Canticles*, to be sick of Love. Thus does the Serpent hiss at the Ways of Godliness, and thus does the *natural* Man argue. But go vain Man, look upon the panting Hart, wonder why it breaths so strongly after the Streams of Water; bid it pant moderately after the Water-Brooks, and when thy empty Breath can abate its Fervency, then, and not 'till then, nay hardly then, wonder at the Strength of a *Christian's* Desire after Communion with his GOD: For as the Hart pants after the Water-Brooks, so panteth his Soul after his GOD, so strongly.

2. So panteth my Soul after Thee, O GOD! so unsatisfiably: And that in a double Sense.

1. 'Tis satisfied with nothing else. 2. 'Tis not satisfied with a little of this.

1. NOTHING can still the weary and thirsty Hart, but the Streams of Water, and nothing can content the panting Soul, but the Fruition of his GOD: GOD never rested 'till He made Man, and Man never rests 'till he enjoys GOD. He has a Soul within him of a vast Capacity, and nothing can fill it to the Brim, but he that's Fullness itself.

'Tis

'Tis the Voice put into every one's Mouth, *Who will shew us any Good?* Indeed 'tis the Errand for which we are sent into the World, to find out Happiness, and yet we seek it so as if we were loath to find it. And Happiness may well have that Inscription, which *Plutarch* tells us, was upon the Temple of *Isis*, *No Man hath taken off my Veil*. We knock at every Creature's Door, but there's nothing within, no filling Entertainment for the Soul; no Creature can bid it Welcome. Would you know what they all amount to? If you'll believe *Solomon's* Reckoning, the very *Sum Total* is, *Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*. Vexation is the very Quintessence of the Creature, and all that can possibly be extracted out of it. Now if Vanity can satisfy, or if Vexation can give Content, if you can gather Grapes off Thorns, or Figs off Thistles, go on to dote upon the Creatures, and to be enamoured with a Shadow of perishing Beauty. The Prophet tells us, all the Creatures are but as the Drop of a Bucket; when the Water's empty'd out of a Bucket, perhaps a Drop stays still behind, a weak Drop, which recollecting all its Forces, yet has not Strength enough to fall. And will such a Drop (think you) satisfy a panting Hart? The Creatures are weighed in the Balance of the Sanctuary, and they are found to be lighter than the Dust of the Balance, and this will enflame the Thirst, rather than quench it. To speak in the Epigrammatist's Language, they are meer nothing. And surely Man is the vainest of all the rest, the *Index* of all the Volumes of Vanity; that by Sin has subjected the Creatures unto the Bondage, under which they groan, and wait to be delivered, and yet dreams of distilling I know not what Felicity out of them. And as for that supposed Excellency, which we fancy in the Creatures, 'tis only to be found in God Himself. Surely that's no panting Soul,

Soul, that forsakes the Fountain of living Waters, and digs to itself broken and empty Cisterns that will hold no Water. The Hart pants unsatisfiably after the Water-Brooks, and the Soul as unsatisfiably after Communion with its GOD; is satisfied with nothing else. But

'TIS not satisfied with a little of this, not a Drop nor a Taste will suffice the thirsty Hart; it does not come like a Dog to the *Nile*, a Lap and away, a Drop can no more quench its Thirst, than it could cool *Dives's* Tongue, though indeed he begged for no more. That short Refreshment, which is shut up in a Drop, does but bespeak a stronger Panting after somewhat more full and satisfactory.

WHEN the Understanding once sees its proper Good. O how sweetly? how presently does the Will embrace it? and it becomes the well-beloved of the Soul. How does it enlarge itself, for the Entertainment of it? And how does it delight to expatiate in so choice a Happiness! He that tasteth a little of GOD's Goodness, thinks he never has enough of it; to be sure, he can never have too much, there's no Fear of surfeiting upon Happiness. 'Tis true the least Glimpse of GOD's favourable Presence is enough to support and cherish the Soul, but 'tis not enough to satisfy the Soul: O how pleasant it is to see *Christ* through the Lattices? and yet the Spouse will never leave Longing 'till she see Him Face to Face. There's Sweetness indeed in a Cluster of *Canaan*, but yet such as sets the Teeth on Edge for more. The thirsty Hart pants after the Water, and the Christian after Fullness of Communion with his GOD: So panteth my Soul after Thee, O GOD! so unsatisfiably. But

3. So *panteth my Soul after Thee, O GOD!* so *uncessantly* until it be satisfied. The thirsty Hart never leaves panting while it has any Being; Delay here does but whet Desire, and give it Time for stronger Forces. And what else is a *Christian's* whole Life, but a continued Annihilation after his GOD? And though this may seem very wearisom and tedious, to be always a Panting: Yet the *Christian's* Soul finds far more incomparable Sweetness, solid and massy Joy, beaten Joy, like beaten Gold; he finds more of this in the very Panting after his GOD, than any Worldling can, when, with the greatest Complacency, he takes his Fill of his choicest Delights, and when he enjoys the Smiles and Blandishment of Fortune, his so much adored Deity.

THE Joys of an Hypocrite, as they are groundless and imaginary, so like his Services, they are vanishing and transitory. But a *Christian* as he's always breathing after his GOD, so he's always drawing Sweetness from Him. And here 'twere easy to shew, how in every Condition the Soul breaths after its GOD, when it sees the Vanity of the most flourishing Condition, it pants after Fulness in its GOD: When it sees the Vexation of a cloudy Condition, it pants after Contentment only to be found in its GOD. But I shall instance only in these two, as having some nearer Acquaintance with the Text, the strong Pantings of a tempted Soul, and the secret Pantings of a languishing and a deserted Soul. And

I. IN Temptations the Soul pants after its GOD. They that are skilled in those Terms tell us, that an Hart is properly a Stag which has escaped a King in Hunting: And there are some such *Christians*, that have escaped the Prince of the Air (that *Nimrod* the mighty Hunter) and all his fiery Darts.

GOD

GOD has set his Bow in the Clouds, as a Token of Peace and Reconciliation (the Rainbow, the Lace of Peace's Coat :) And the Devil he must set his Bow in the Clouds too, in the troubled and cloudy Spirit, and there are Arrows in the Hand of the Mighty. And how shall the Soul escape these fiery Darts, but by panting after its GOD as the only Place of Refuge, *a strong Tower and a Rock of Defence*, and by breathing after Heaven, as a Place where 'tis sure to be free from them.

ARISE, O LORD, and save me, O my GOD, from the Mouth of the Lion that's ready to devour me, lest he tear my Soul and rent it to Pieces, while there is none to deliver. Lo, the Enemy has bent his Bow, and made ready his Arrow upon the String, that he may secretly shoot at the Upright in Heart: But compass me, O GOD, with thy Favour as with a Shield; keep me as the Apple of thine Eye, and hide me under the Covert of thy Wings: Deliver me from my strong Enemy, and from him that hateth me, for he is too strong for me. O send me Help from thy Sanctuary, and strengthen me out of Sion! And thus when with a sure Recumbency it leans upon its GOD, it has Leisure with an holy Triumph to out-brave the Enemy: And as for thee that wouldst make a Partition between me and my GOD, see if thou canst tear me from the bleeding Wounds of my dying Saviour; rend me (if thou knowest how) from the Bowels, the tenderest Bowels of GOD's dearest Compassion: See if the Gates of Hell can prevail against the Rock of Eternity. If Thou, O GOD, be with us, if the GOD of Jacob be our Refuge, we will not fear what all the Powers of Darkness can do against us: *We are more than Conquerors.* These are the strong Pantings of a tempted Soul.

SECONDLY,

SECONDLY, In Desertions, even then the Soul pants after its GOD; when the Soul is ready to perish in the Dark, it pants after the Water-Brooks. GOD dips his Pen in Gall, and writes bitter Things against it. The Soul is a-thirst, and, like its Saviour, can have nothing but Gall and Vinegar to drink, yet still it pants after its GOD. 'Tis under a Cloud indeed, but even these Clouds shall drop Fatness, they shall drop upon the Dwellings of the Wilderness, and the barren Soul shall rejoice: Like *John the Baptist*, it feeds upon Honey in the Desert, not wild Honey, such as the Worldling's Joy, but Honey out of the Rock, upon the Tip of the Rod like *Jonathan's*, to open the Eye, and to refresh the Heart. A Soul in a Desertion, is as it were a Soul in a Consumption, and one only Taste of GOD's sweetest Love in *Jesus Christ*, is a sure Restorative for such a languishing Soul. Now in the greatest Eclipse of GOD's Favour, when there is not so much as a secret Light, yet there's a strong Influence, nay stronger than at another Time, for *his* Strength is proportion'd to *our* Weakness: And they are *Paul's* own Words, *When I am weak, then I am strong*. There's a Door of Hope open'd in the Valley of *Achor*; and now the Soul pants after GOD, as a Father of Mercies, and a GOD of Consolations. A GOD of Consolation? What higher what sweeter Strain? All the Balm of *Gilead* seems to be wrapt up in this Expression. A GOD of Consolation; that's one, who in the strangest Exigencies and greatest Repugnances, when Comforts fail, can create new Comforts, can raise them out of the barren Womb of Nothing, can do it with a Word, for Omnipotency useth to put itself to no greater Expences: The very commanding Word, Let there be Light in such a Soul, is enough to make it more glorious than the Empyrean

Hea-

Heaven. And now the Soul pants thus, as you may hear *David* panting almost in every *Psalms*: *How long wilt Thou forget me, O LORD, for ever? And how long wilt Thou hide thy Face from me? Hath the LORD forgotten to be gracious? And hath He in Anger shut up his tender Mercies? And is his Arm shorten'd, that it cannot save? Or is his Mercy clean gone for ever, and does his Promise fail for evermore? Weeping hath endur'd for a Night, Why comes not Joy in the Morning? When wilt Thou satisfy the longing Soul, and fill the Thirsty with thy Goodness? When wilt Thou lead me into thy green Pastures, and refresh my Soul with Sweetness? When, O when! shall I enjoy an Ordinance in its orient Lustre, in its heavenly Beauty, in its full and purest Sweetness? When, O blessed Saviour! wilt Thou become the Lilly of the Vallies? The Beauty and the Ornament of the humble Soul? And when shall these Vallies stand so thick of Corn, that they may laugh and sing? And then it breaks into some such Expressions, as that of a sweet Singer in our *Israel*.*

*Ah, my dear GOD! though I be clean forgot,
Let me not love Thee, if I love Thee not.*

These are the secret Pantings of a languishing Soul.

THUS you see how the Soul pants after its GOD, even as the Hart pants after the Water-Brooks: We are to discover in the next Place, what Manner of Communion with its GOD it is, that the Soul thus pants after, and that either mediate Communion with Him here in his Ordinances, or immediate Communion with Him hereafter in Glory. And

FIRST, it strongly desires Acquaintance with Him here in his Ordinances. *Chrysestom* tells us, that *David*, like a Lover in Absence, must express Affection: As they have their Sighs, and passionate Complaints: Their loving Exclamations, and sundry Discoveries of Affection; they can meet with never a Tree, but in the Bark of it they must engrave the Name of their Darling; so the true Lovers of GOD are always thinking upon Him, sighing for Him, panting after Him, talking of Him, and (if 'twere possible) would engrave the Name of the LORD *Jesus* upon the Breasts of all the Men in the World: Look upon *David*, now a banish'd Man, and fled from the Presence of *Saul*, and see how he behaves himself: Not like *Themistocles* or *Camillus*, or some of those brave banish'd Worthies. He does not complain of the Ungratefulness of his Country, the Malice of his Adversaries, and his own unhappy Success: No, instead of Murmuring, he falls a Panting, and that only after his GOD. He's banish'd from the Sanctuary, the Palace of GOD's nearest Presence and chiefest Residence, he can't enjoy the Beauty of Holiness, and all other Places seem to him but as the Tents of *Kedar*: He's banish'd from the Temple, and he thinks himself banished from his GOD, as 'tis in the following Words; *O when shall I come and appear before the Face of GOD?* The whole Stream of Expositors runs this Way: That 'tis meant of his strong Longing to visit the Temple, and those amiable Courts of his GOD, with which his Soul was so much taken, and so 'tis equivalent to that in the *lxxiii. Psalm*, *My Soul thirsteth for Thee, to see thy Glory and thy Power, so as I have seen it in the Sanctuary*, there to appear before the Face of GOD. In the Ordinances appears the Face of GOD, as *Calvin* speaks, suppose a Glass, ('tis one of our Divine's Illustrations.)

Illustrations.) When a Man hath look'd into it, should keep a permanent and unvanishing *Species* of his Face, tho' he himself afterwards were absent, we might well say there were the Face of such a Man. The Gospel is such a Glass, representing *Christ* unto us, so that when we shall come to see Him Face to Face in Heaven, we may be able to say, Surely this is the very Saviour that was described to me in the Gospel: GOD has made Himself very conspicuous in his own Ordinances.

No Doubt, but that even now GOD was a little Sanctuary unto *David*, and he had a private Oratory in his own Breast, where he could mentally retire, and shut up his Thoughts and Affections in that interior Closet, and yet he pants after the publick Worship of his GOD. Musick in Confort is sweetest. And some have took it for mysterious in Nature, that Affections are wrought upon in Publick more strongly than in private. The Ordinances; these are the Water-Brooks *David's* Heart pants after, Living Water, bubbling up to Eternity. And yet 'tis not the Outside of an Ordinance that the Soul thus breathes for; alas! there's little Sweetness in a Shell, as the Apostle says in another Case, the Surface of it soon passes away, and 'tis practical Popery to rest in an *Opus operatum*. You may hear *David* panting in another Place, *O who will give me to drink of the Water of the Well of Bethlehem?* It was not the outward Water that he so much longed for. You see when that was brought him by the Hazard of Mens Lives, 'twas but Water spilt upon the Ground: No, 'twas a Saviour to be born in *Bethlehem* that his Soul thirsted after: *O who will give me to drink of the Water of the Well of Bethlehem?* Thou hast open'd thy Mouth wide

(O blessed Prophet!) and thy Saviour hath fill'd it: Thou hast tasted of the Water which He has given thee to drink, and thou shalt never thirst any more; but 'tis a Well of Water springing up in thee to eternal Life. A Soul breathes after an Ordinance as an Opportunity of having freer Intercourse with its GOD; to have an heavenly Tincture upon it, to breath in so sweet an Air, to be steep'd in a Divine Nature, to have Foretastes of Happiness, a Prepossession of Heaven, and some Dawnings of Glory. And then it enjoys it in its orient Lustre, in its heavenly Beauty, in its full and purest Sweetness, when it meets with its GOD there, and encreaseth its Acquaintance with Him. And would you see how the Soul thus breaths after its GOD in every Ordinance?

1. IN the *Word*, there it desires the pure Milk, as the Apostle speaks. Faith pants after a Promise, a Breast of Consolation. The Soul lies panting at the Pool of *Bethesda*, and waits for the Stirring of the Waters.

2. As for the Sacrament of the LORD's-Supper, there are *mellita flumina*, streaming Brooks of Butter and Honey, as *Job* speaks: And O how welcome is the panting Soul hither! GOD has sent a Messenger to invite him. *Ho! every one that thirsteth, let him come and drink freely: Drink; yea, drink abundantly, O Beloved!* 'Tis most true here that which *Trismegistus* feign'd, GOD sets a great Cup full of Celestial Liquor, with this Proclamation, "Up Soul, and drench thyself in this Cup of the Spirit". The Cup overflows. Here if ever, the Soul is comforted with Flaggons, and *Christ's Love* is sweeter than Wine.

3. How

3. How can I tell you the strong Pantings of the Soul in Prayer? The Apostle calls them, *Rom. viii. 26. Groans unutterable*, when the Soul is breathing up sweet Odours unto the Throne of Grace, and Heaven itself is thus perfumed. In all these you see how the Soul breaths after Communion with its GOD, mediate Communion with Him here. But

SECONDLY, It pants after immediate Communion with Him in Glory, and the following Words will bear this Sense, *O when shall I appear before the Face of GOD in Glory!* Thus Paul pants, *I desire to be dissolv'd, and to be with Christ.* Thus the Souls pants in the *Revelation, Come, LORD JESUS, come quickly.* Here we sip of the Water of Life, but there we shall drink it up, tho' there be Eternity to the Bottom: Here we are Sons of Hope, and that's a panting Grace: Hope indeed is an early Joy; but when Grace shall be ripen'd into Glory, then Hope shall be swallowed up in Fruition; and thus we with open Face, beholding the Glory of GOD, are chang'd into the same Image from Glory to Glory; that's either, from his Glory we become glorious, or else from Grace to Glory; for Grace is Glory in the Bud, as Glory is Grace at the Full. Surely Glory is nothing else but a bright Constellation of Graces; and Happiness nothing but the Quintessence of Holiness. And now the Soul by an holy Gradation ascends higher, from those First-fruits and Earnest-pennies of Joy here, to the Consideration of the Fulness of Glory which it expects hereafter.

BUT when the Soul shall be unsheath'd from the Body, (that I may allude to the *Chaldee Idiom*) how gloriously shall it then glister? Or, to speak in *Plutarch's* Expression, *ἡ ψυχὴ ἐκβάσσει ἐκ σώματος ποτε*

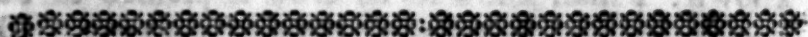
in *repose*, when the Soul shall be unclouded from the Body, in what Brightness shall it appear? What? did *David's* Soul, his panting Soul, here leap for Joy, when he remember'd thee, *O Sion*? O how triumphantly then does his glorified Soul now sing in the new *Jerusalem*! Did his Soul sing so sweetly in a Cage of Clay? What Melody (think you) does it now make, being let loose to all Eternity? Is there such Delicousness in a Cluster of Grapes, cut down in the Brook *Eshcol*, what look you for in the Vintage of *Caanan*, the Land of Promise? Is but a Prospect of that holy Land upon the Top of Mount *Pisgah* so pleasant and delightful? Surely then their Lot is fallen to them in a fair Ground, and they have a goodly Heritage, that enjoy the Sweetness of the Land that flows with Milk and Honey. Has but a Glimpse of GOD's favourable Countenance, such a powerful, such a satisfying Influence upon the Soul? O think (if you can) how it shall be ravish'd with the Fullness of the Beatifical Vision! when the clarify'd Soul shall drink in the Beams of Glory, and be filled with Joy to the very Brim. When the panting Soul shall rest itself in the Bosom of a Saviour, and fix his Eye upon the Brightness of his Majesty to all Eternity; nay, when Eternity shall seem too short for the Beholding and Admiring of such transcendent Excellencies, and for the Solemnizing of those heavenly Nuptials between *Christ* and his most beloved Spouse: Where all the Powers of Heaven shall dance for Joy, while a Consort of *Seraphims* sing an *Epithalamium*. *Beloved* (says the Apostle) *now are ye the Sons of GOD, but it appears not as yet what ye shall be.* This choice Prerogative of Adoption does but shadow out your future Glory, for it appears not as yet what ye shall be. Now ye are Sons, but in your Minority; Sons, but yet insulted over by Servants. Now ye are

are Sons, but then ye shall be Heirs, Heirs of Glory, and Co-heirs with *Christ*. Now you see in a Glass darkly, in a Riddle, and that Book which is call'd the *Revelation*, is most veiled with Obscurity; but then you shall see Face to Face; —as GOD promises to manifest to *Moses*; and some think, that this Place of the Apostle alludes to those very Words taken out of *Numb. xii. 6.* The Riddle that hath posed so many, shall then be explicated, Happiness shall be unmask'd, the Book shall be unseal'd, the white Stone shall sparkle most oriently, you shall behold with open Face the Glory of GOD, you shall know as you are known: I shall know so as GOD is pleased to be known by me, to manifest Himself unto me. O let every pious *panting Soul*, with its Apprehensions rais'd, and its Affections advanc'd, wait and long and breath for so glorious a Time, when the *Panting Soul* shall become an enjoying, an embracing Soul. When Water-Brooks shall be turn'd into Rivers of Pleasure, ever springing from GOD's Right-hand, who is the Fountain of Being, where the glorious Rays that flow from the Face of *Christ*, shall gild those pleasant and crystalline Streams, and there shall be fresh and eternal Ebullitions of Joy, so that the pure Soul may bath itself in Bliss, and be forever steep'd in inexpressible, in inconceivable Sweetness!





MOUNT EBAL.



JUDGES V. 23.

Curse ye Meroz, (saith the Angel of the LORD) Curse bitterly the Inhabitants thereof, because they came not out to the Help of the LORD, to the Help of the LORD against the Mighty.

THIS Chapter is filled with a Triumphant Song, that was made by *Deborah*, that glorious Nursing-mother in *Israel*, and after a great and famous Conquest, which God had given her and *Barak*, over *Jabin* and *Sisera*, and all their mighty Hosts. She presently after the Victory breaks out into a *Psalms* of Thanksgiving, she stirs up her Soul to the Praise of her God, and excites *Barak* to bear her Company in this her Joy: *Awake Deborah, awake, &c. Deborah* in

in the *Hebrew* Language, signifies a Bee; a Bee by them is called דבורה, a working, industrious Creature; and this Song may well be looked upon as *Deborah's* Honey-comb, a sweet and precious Song, dropping from her gracious Lips, *Deborah's* Honey-comb; but withal this Bee has a Sting, *Curse ye Meroz, saith the Angel of the LORD, Curse ye bitterly:* Which strikes through all such as maintain not the Cause of GOD, against his Enemies; *that come not out to the Help of the LORD, to the Help of the LORD against the Mighty.*

If you look upon the foregoing Words, you may see there how this holy Prophetess takes an exact View of the Behaviour of the several Tribes in this Time of War, when the People of *Israel* were now opposing the *Canaanites*, such Enemies as GOD had devoted to Destruction. And after special Notice taken, she gives just Commendations of all such as were active in the LORD's Cause, and withal, sharp Reproofs to all such as were negligent in this their Duty. And first she begins with the Praise of them that deserve it.

OUT of Ephraim there was a Root of them against Amalek.] This Tribe sent in Aid to *Israel*, and the Root that sprung from hence against *Amalek* was *Deborah* herself, who judged *Israel*, dwelling under a Palm Tree, between *Ramath* and *Bethel*, in Mount *Ephraim*; and by her Charge and Authority the War was undertaken; it was she that whetted *Barak*, and encouraged the *Israelites* against their Enemies.

AFTER thee Benjamin, among thy People.] Against thee, O *Amalek*; some of this Tribe also adjoyned themselves to *Deborah*.

OUT

OUT of Machir came down Governors.] The Tribe of *Manasseh* branched itself into two noble Families, that of *Machir*, and the other of *Jair*; and out of *Machir* there came worthy Men to help in the Battle.

AND out of Zebulon they that handle the Pen of the Writer.] Learned Men, and skilful Lawyers, such as handle the Pen, these helped forward in the War, both (1.) By their Counsel and Advice: And this is none of the smallest Aids. Or (2.) By Weapons and outward Aid; such as were wont to handle the Pen of the Writer, they now handle the Spear of the Soldier.

AND the Princes of Issachar were with Deborah.] Choice and worthy Ones, Heads of the People.

AND Issachar.] Not only the Princes, but the Rest of the Tribe.

AND also Barak.] He was the Captain, Chief in the War. He was sent on Foot into the Valley.] He was the Leader of the Foot-men in the Valley. Thus far she commends, in the next Words she reproves.

FOR the Divisions of Reuben, there were great Thoughts of Heart; why abodest thou among the Sheep-folds, to hear the Bleatings of the Flocks? For the Divisions of Reuben, there were great Searchings of Heart.] There was great Wonderings why Reuben came not out to help their Brethren; for the Divisions of Reuben, that they should hold back, and not accompany the rest of the Tribes; many enquiries why Reuben came not. This Tribe dwelt beyond Jordan, in goodly Pasture; and they too much minded their Cattle, and neglected the Care of

of the Common-wealth. They were hearing the Bleatings of the Sheep, and the Bellowings of the Oxen, when their Brethren heard the Alarm of War. *Why abodest thou among thy Sheepfolds?* Hast thou no Care of *Israel's* Troubles, of the bleeding Condition of thy Brethren? Dost thou take more Care of thy Sheep than of them? See how the fierce Enemy like a Wolf, comes to devour them, and proud *Sisera* is ready to tear them in Pieces! Wilt thou not take as much Care of them as of thy Sheep?

GILEAD abode beyond *Jordan*.] Both the Families of *Manasseh*, *Machir* and *Jair* dwelt in *Gilead*, and possessed it: Now the Family of *Machir* was commended before, so that here is meant of *Jair*. Or else the Words are to be took thus, as an Answer to *Reuben*, Why couldst not thou come from beyond *Jordan*, as well as *Gilead*; *Gilead* abode beyond *Jordan*, and yet he came? and so this tends to *Gilead's* Praise, and to *Reuben's* Dishonour.

AND *why did Dan remain in Ships?*] Either 1. To shelter themselves from the Enemies, when they heard of *Jabin* and *Sisera's* coming. Or else 2. *Dan* remained in Ships, he minded his own Business and Merchandise. And why did *Dan* remain in Ships, when all *Israel* was almost suffering Shipwreck?

ASHER continued on the Sea Shore, and abode in his Breaches.] The Words include a double Excuse which *Asher* had, why it came not to help *Israel*; 1. They dwelt afar off by the Sea-shore. 2. Their Towns and Cities were ruinous and not well fenc'd, and therefore they staid at Home to defend and fortify themselves, they abode in their Breaches; but there was another Breach that *Asher* might have thought of, a Breach of *God's* Law and Commandment, which enjoyned his People to mutual Love, and a joint Opposition of their Enemies.

ZEBULUN and Naphtali were a People that jeopardized their Lives unto the Death in the high Places of the Field. After a more general Commendation of some Tribes, and Reproofs of others, she then comes to a special *Encomium* of these two, as most eminent in their Service.

ZEBULUN and Naphtali reproached their Lives, so 'tis in the Original; they esteemed them not worth the having with *Israel's* Ruin; they preferred GOD's, Cause before their Lives. *They reproached their Lives.*] For it seemed a strange Thing to others, and little better than ridiculous, for a small Number, a little Handful of Men, to go against a vast Army. Enemies cloathed with Terroure, that might even blow them away in less then an Hour: And yet they go out against *Jabin* and *Sisera*, they fear not his nine hundred Chariots of Iron.

IN the high Places of the Field.] On Mount Tabor, where they might have a View of *Sisera's* Army, a terrible Prospect for Zebulun and Naphtali one would have thought. And yet they march forward with an undaunted Resolution.

AND *Meroz* has a more bitter Curse than any of the Rest. GOD took Notice of all the others Remissness, and hath left it upon Record, to the View of all Posterity; but *Meroz* has a Curse with a greater Emphasis.

CURSE ye *Meroz*.] The *Jews* have a Proverb, we must leap up to Mount *Gerizim*, but creep into Mount *Ebal*. You know upon Mount *Gerizim* all the Blessings were pronounced by *Moses*, as upon Mount *Ebal* all the Curses; so then you must leap up to Mount *Gerizim*, be forward and ready to Bless; but creep into Mount *Ebal*, be slow and unwilling

willing to Curse; but where GOD gives a special Command to Curse, there you must leap up to Mount *Ebal* too.

CURSE ye Meroz, *saith the Angel of the LORD.*] This does not come out of any private Respect that *Deborah* had, but she has a special Command to Curse them, *saith the Angel of the LORD.*] Expositors are dubious, מלאך יהרה:—It may be rendered, the Messenger of the LORD, and so some take it to be *Barak*, who called out (as is very like) this City to the War, but they refused to come: But whether it be meant of an Angel properly, or of any that had a prophetic Spirit, GOD's Messenger, his Angel; this we are sure, the Drift is to shew that this Curse comes by Divine Authority.

CURSE ye bitterly.] Curse ye with Cursings, an usual Hebraism. *But how comes Meroz to have a more bitter Curse, than any of the Rest that came not?* This City was very near the Place where the Battle was fought, it was very nigh Mount *Tabor*, the Inhabitants were within the Noise of the Trumpet; other Tribes had Excuses, this City none. And no doubt but they were requested by *Barak* to help, and yet they came not.

BECAUSE *they came not out to the Help of the LORD.*] Why? Does the LORD need any Aid? And does the GOD of Hosts need the Help of *Meroz*? *Is the Hand of Omnipotency shortened that it cannot save?* Does the Mighty GOD call for Help? What means this holy Prophetess, when she says and repeats this, *They came not out to the Help of the LORD?*

THEY that help *Israel*, are said to help the LORD. What is done to the Church, GOD reck-

ons as done for Himself, *Inasmuch as ye did it to one of these little ones, you did it unto Me*; O the infinite Goodness of GOD, that hath joyned his own Glory, and the Salvation of his People together! He hath wrought *Israel's* Name in the Frame of his own Glory; it is for his Honour to save *Israel*; They that come not out to help *Israel*, they come not out to help the LORD.

GOD needs not the Help of Men, He can save his People miraculously, He did so here; *The Stars fought in their Courses against Sisera*; He can raise a glorious Army of Stars, and can order them as He pleases; they shall all keep their Ranks, they fight in their Courses against *Sisera*. How did the Stars fight against him?

THEIR Beams and Influences were their Weapons; they wrought Impressions in the Air, and raised Meteors, Rain, Hail, Lightning, Thunder. The Stars like bright and eminent Commanders, lead under them an Army of Meteors, their train'd Soldiers, they set them in their several Postures, like the Centurion they say to one, *Go, and he goeth*; and to another, *Come, and he comes*. If they bid the Clouds Discharge, they instantly dart out Lightning-flashes, and present a Volley of Thunder-claps; they'll try what they can do with proud *Sisera*: And if *Israel* be too weak for them, the Host of Heaven shall fight against them; but all this is no Thank to *Meroz*; nay, it rather aggravates their Sin, and so embitters their Curse; shall inanimate Creatures more Sympathize with *Israel*, than their Brethren? Shall the Stars fight in their Courses, and shall not *Meroz* stir to help them? And the River *Kishon* sweeps them away (as *Dung*) that ancient River, the River *Kishon*, now swelling by Reason of the excess of Rain, and drowning many of the *Canaanites*,

as the *Egyptians* were once Drowned in the *Red Sea*; they sink like Lead in the mighty Waters. Stars and Rivers fight for them, but *Meroz* will not help them.

AGAINST the *Mighty*,] *Jabin* and *Sisera*, potent Enemies. The Church of GOD has had always mighty Opposers; *Satan* the Prince of the Air, *Antichrist* and his Forces. These and many such like Observations lie scattered in the Words, and might be gathered out of them, but we will unite them all in this one Truth, which is directly intended in them.

DOCT. Every *Christian* should be of a publick Spirit; he is bound under Pain of a bitter Curse, (as much as in him lies) to promote the Cause of GOD, and to help the Church of GOD against its mighty Enemies.

We'll branch it into these two Particulars:

1. 'Tis a Thing full of Reason and Equity, that every one that professes himself an *Israelite*, should help *Israel*; that *Christians* should be of a publick Spirit.

2. How every one may help the LORD against the *Mighty*, and stand for the Peace of *Sion*.

(1.) A CHRISTIAN should be of a publick Spirit, not seeking only himself and his own Ends; but he should seek the Glory of GOD, and the Good of *Sion*, of his Church and People.

1. IT is the very Nature of Goodness, to diffuse itself abroad in a spreading and liberal Manner; for it

it does not thus lose any Thing, but increases its Being by communicating itself.

2. YOU may see some Prints and Foot-steps of this in Nature, some obscure Representations of this Truth. The Sun, it does not engross its Light, but scatters them Abroad, gilds the whole World with them; it shines more for others than itself, it is a publick Light.

LOOK on a Fountain, it does not bind in its Streams, seal up itself, and enclose its Waters, but spends itself with a continual Bubbling forth; it streams forth in a liberal, and communicative Manner; it is a publick Spring.

3. AND the weak and glimmering Light of Nature, shews thus much, that a Man is not Born for himself alone; he is a sociable Creature, and sent into the World for the good of others. The Voice of an Heathen, a Man's Country, and his Friend, and others challenge great Part of him.

4. CONSIDER, that every Man's private Welfare is included in the Publick. The Welfare of *Meroz* depended upon *Israel*'s Safety, what would have become of *Meroz*, if the rest of their Brethren had perished? So that it was great Folly in *Meroz*, not to come out to the Help of *Israel*. When the Disease seize upon a vital Part, as the Head, or the Heart; then every Member is in Danger, though for the present they may be free from Pain. The well-being of every private Man, depends on the publick Good. A single Drop is soon dryed up and consumed; but a Drop in the Ocean, when 'tis united to a Multitude of other Drops, 'tis there more safe; and a Drop by itself is weak, and can make no Resistance: But a Drop in the Ocean is terrible.

ble. Men have a more safe, and a more honourable Being, as joyned to the Whole, than taken single by themselves. A single Drop can do nothing, but a Multitude of Drops joyned together, will make a Stream, and carry all before them: A single Beam is obscure, but in the Sun the Center of Rays, meeting in the publick Point, they are Glorious.

AND these Arguments may prevail with you as Men, living in common Society; but then as *Christians*,

I. CONSIDER, that GOD's Children have been always of publick Spirits, seeking the Glory of GOD, and the good of *Sion*, *Exod. xxxii. 32. If not, blot me I pray thee out of thy Book; Moses* out of vehement Zeal, would part with his own Happiness, rather than *Israel* should perish; if it would make more for the Glory of GOD, he would be content to be damned, or at least to have the Beams of GOD's favourable Presence withdrawn from him. *Rom. ix. 3. I could wish, that myself were accursed from Christ, (or separated) for my Brethren, my Kinsmen, according to the Flesh:* I could be content to have the Face of *Christ* hid from me, for my Brethrens Sake, as GOD's Face was once hid from *Christ* upon the Cross; *My GOD, my GOD, why hast Thou forsaken Me?* A most strong Affection and Zeal for the publick Good. *Paul* knew what the Face of *Christ* was; how glorious a Sight it was, to see GOD Face to Face: And he knew what Answer GOD had given to *Moses* too; *Him that sins, him will I blot out of my Book:* And yet out of a most ardent Desire of the Salvation of the *Jews*, he will part with the Face of *Christ*, so they may be saved; here were publick Spirits indeed:

WHAT should I tell you of *Uriah*, that famous Soldier, his brave Resolution; how he would take no Complacency in outward Things? And mark his Reason, 2 Sam. xi. 11. *The Ark, and Israel, and Judah abide in Tents, and my Lord Joab, and the Servants of my Lord are encamped in the open Fields*; as if he should say, What shall the Ark be in Danger, and shall *Uriah* be secure? Or shall my Lord *Joab* be more forward than I am in *Israel's* Cause? *As thou livest, and as thy Soul liveth, I will not do this Thing*; he shews a most generous and publick Spirit; and this was no small Aggravation of *David's* Sin.

SEE in the *Psalms* cxxxvii. How the *Psalmist* and the rest of *GOD's* People behave themselves. *By the Rivers of Babylon, we sat down and wept, when we remembered thee, O Sion! We hanged our Harps upon the Willows in the Midst thereof: If I forget thee, Jerusalem, let my right Hand forget her Cunning. David* had a most delicate Touch upon the Harp; he could still *Saul's* evil Spirit with his Musick; but *if I forget thee, Jerusalem, let my right Hand forget her Cunning.*

AND when did *Jeremy* make his Lamentation, that whole Book of Mourning; but when the Glory of *Sion* was laid in the Dust; when *Jerusalem*, the Lady of Nations was made desolate? *GOD's* People have been always of publick Spirits, and have sympathized with the Church.

II. THAT you may follow so good Example; think whose Cause it is: The Cause of *Israel*, is the Cause of *GOD*; *To the Help of the LORD, &c.* Can you have a better Cause? The Good of the Church, and the Glory of *GOD* are knit together. So that he that seeks the good of the Church, does
in

in the same Act seek the Glory of GOD: And he that helps not *Israel*, comes not out to the Help of the LORD. Now you are bound to maintain the Cause of GOD, and to help the LORD.

1. BY many Engagements; as Creatures at his Beck, He has a Sovereignty and Dominion over you. Not to obey the great GOD, is to deny his Supremacy. You are bound in a Way of Thankfulness, to stand for Him and his Cause, by those sweet Mercies, those precious Pledges of his Love, which He every Moment heaps upon you; by those many Blessings that come swimming to you in the Blood of a Saviour.

2. BY many Promises, Vows, Protections. Your first and original Vow in Baptism, obliges you to maintain the Cause of GOD, and of his Church, against all the Enemies thereof. And you have often repeated this Vow, and sealed it again in the LORD's Supper, for you know that's a Sealing up of the Covenant: Now what's the Covenant but this, *That He shall be your GOD, and you shall be his People?*

3. CERTAINTY to prosper; it is the Cause of GOD; a *Christian* is of the surest Side. There's none but has a Mind to prosper, then *pray for the Peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love Thee*. There's none can eclipse the Glory of GOD; it's beyond the Power of a Creature, to Dim the Lustre of his Crown; GOD will maintain his own Cause, or else He should lose of his Glory; his mighty Arm will get Himself the Victory. *Christ* is the Captain of his Church, and He is the Chiefest of ten Thousand, (the Ensign Bearer.) And this is Comfort enough for a *Christian*, the Enemies must conquer *Christ*, before they can overcome his Church.

Church. *Christ* the Head of the Church is Impregnable. This is the second Ground why *Christians* must stand for the Cause of the Church; because 'tis the Cause of *GOD*, to which they are bound. (1.) By Engagements, many and great. (2.) By Vows. (3.) Encouraged with Certainty of Success.

III. A *CHRISTIAN* is bound to be of a publick Spirit, by Virtue of the Communion of Saints. Every *Christian* is a Member of *Christ's* mystical Body, and so must take Care for the Good of the Whole. He that is united to *Christ* the Head, must be knit also to the other Members; he that does not sympathize with the Church, is not of the Body; he that can hear of the Breaches of *Sion*, and the Decays of *Jerusalem*; he that can see the Apples of *GOD's* Eye pierced through, and not be affected with it, will you call such, Members of *Christ's* Body? He that is not truly affected with the bleeding Condition of the *Christians* in *Ireland*, does in Effect deny this Article of his Creed, *The Communion of Saints*.

IV. IT is against the Mighty: *Christians* had need have publick Spirits, because they have publick Enemies; the Devil, a publick Enemy; *Antichrist*, a publick Enemy: They are private enough in Respect of their Malice, and Subtlety; but publick in Force, and Opposition. As there is the Paw of the Lion for Strength, so there is the Head of the Serpent for Wisdom; but yet the Head of the Serpent is broken, their Wisdom infatuated: *He that is in Heaven, can counterplot them, and Laugh them to Scorn*: But yet thus much you may learn of the Enemies of the Church, to study the publick Good: They seek the Ruin of the Whole, and why should not you seek the Welfare of the Whole? If they be so Industrious, so Forward and Active in a bad Cause,

Cause, will you be negligent and remiss in the best Cause, in the Cause of GOD, in the Helping of the LORD? What won't a Jesuite do for the Catholick Cause? He'll compass Sea and Land to gain one Profelyte. They do publick Mischiefs, and have a malignant and venomous Influence into all Places where they come; and why should not *Christians* do as publick Service for GOD, as they do for the Devil? Come out therefore against the Mighty, to the Help of the LORD. That which was *Meroz* his Excuse perhaps, because the *Canaanites* were mighty ones, therefore they durst not come out against them; this, GOD makes the very Aggravation of their Sin; for if the Enemies were mighty, *Israel* had more Need of their Help. And *Meroz* might have considered, that as there are mighty Enemies, so there is a mighty GOD too, an Almighty GOD, that can crush proud *Sisera*, and dash in Pieces the strongest Enemy. And now you have seen that it is but fit and equal for a *Christian* to be of a publick Spirit, to come out to the Help of the LORD.

(2.) THE Manner how every *Christian* may promote the publick Good. And here by Way of Premisal:

1. IT must be in a lawful and warrantable Way. They that come out to Help the LORD must help Him in his own Ways, such Ways as his Word allows, or else they do not help the LORD, but offend the LORD in breaking his Commandments; *Job* xiii. 7. *Will you speak wickedly for GOD, and talk deceitfully for Him?* Does GOD's Glory depend upon Man's Sin? Does He allow any Man to Sin for the Advancing of his Glory? Nay, does He not forbid it, and detest it? It is a clear and undeniable Truth of our Saviour; *You must not do Evil,*
that

that Good may come of it. A Speech of one of the Ancients; *You must not tell the least Lie, if you could save the whole World by it.* To the right conducting of an Action, besides the Intention of an End, there must be also the Choice of just Means for the Accomplishing of it.

2. IN a prudent and orderly Way. They that come out to the Help of the LORD, must keep their Ranks; *The Stars fought in their Courses against Sifera.* Christians must keep their several Stations; if there be Confusion, you can't tell a Canaanite from an Israelite, a Friend from a Foe. Let every Christian that studies the publick Good, keep his own Place; the Magistrate his; the Ministers theirs; and the People also theirs. And now there are some Ways very good and warrantable, by which Christians may come out to the Help of the LORD, and to the Aiding of Israel.

(I.) BY Prayer. To be sure this is a lawful Means; and 'tis a prevalant Means too, and has great Influence upon the publick Good; *Exod. xvii. 11.* When Moses held up his Hand, then Israel prevailed. 'Tis a special Benefit that Christians have by the Communion of Saints, the Prayers one of another. There's a Stock of Prayers the Church has, and the weakest Christian has a Share in it. Thou hast the Benefit of many Christians Prayers, whose Face thou never sawest, whom thou never heardest of; perhaps he lives in *America*, or some remote Corner of the World; but wherever he be, thou hast the Benefit of his Prayer, as a Member of the mystical Body. For there's no Prayer put up to GOD for his Church, but it includes every particular Member of the Church in it; so that Prayer does wonderfully promote the publick Good. *Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem*, pray for it, that's the Way to have it.

it. And many a one that can use no other Means, yet may use this. Many a weak, and aged, and sickly one, unfit for War, and yet powerful in Prayer. And these Weapons of our Warfare, are not carnal, but mighty. You can't encounter an Enemy; but you may thus wrestle with the Almighty. You can't batter down a strong Hold; but yet ye can besiege the Throne of Grace. You are not fit to be set in a Watch-Tower, to spy out the Approach of an Enemy; but yet you may watch unto Prayer. And this is a great Advantage that *Christians* have over their Enemies: The Enemy knows not how to pray; they know how to curse, and swear, and blaspheme the Name of GOD; but they know not how to pray: Or if they do pray, and tell their Prayers with their Beads, that they may know the Number of them; yet their Prayer is turned into Sin, *The Prayer of the Wicked is an Abomination*. Let them cry aloud to their Idols, and see if they will hear them; they can't look that GOD should hear them: For, *If I regard Iniquity in my Heart, the LORD will not hear my Prayer*. O then let *Christians* know their own Happiness, and make use of this spiritual Weapon, that opposes the Enemy more than all other Weapons whatsoever.

AND this is the chief Use you are to make of all the News you hear, to know how to order your Prayers accordingly. No Question more ordinary in Mens Mouths, than, What News? And I find no Fault with the Question, it is good and fitting: But News is not to be enquired after only for the satisfying of Mens Curiosity; as the *Athenians* spent all their Time in enquiring for News: But this is the main End of it, to know how to send up your Prayers for the Good of the Church; and your Praises for such Mercies as GOD bestows upon it. All News heard by a publick Spirit, will stir up
Prayer

Prayer or Thanksgiving. This is the Use you are to make of News; if sad News of the Churches Misery and Desolation, then send up more fervent Prayer, that GOD would repair the Breaches of it, and settle it in a flourishing Condition; if welcome News, then praise GOD for his Goodness, and desire Him to perfect the great Work He has begun. This is one special Means to promote the publick Good, the Prayer of the Righteous. And GOD always when He intends any great Mercy, pours upon his People a Spirit of Prayer; He stirs up their Hearts in this Way; He opens their Mouth wide before He fills it.

(2.) SELF-REFORMATION. This has great Influence upon the publick Good. And how can you expect a publick and glorious Reformation, unless first you reform in private? Look upon the Grievances of your own Soul; hearken unto those many Petitions that are put up to you by the Ministers; who beseech you to be reconciled unto GOD. Every Sin adds to Wrath; it provokes GOD, pulls down his Judgments, and ripens a Nation for Destruction, and has a malignant and venomous Influence upon the whole. So then the turning from Sin, and reforming your Ways, is the Means to divert Judgments, and to bring down Mercies. If there were more private Reformations in Mens Spirits; there is no doubt but GOD would bless the publick Reformation. Sin puts more Rubs in the Way than any Enemy or Opposer whatsoever. This is the great Mountain that hinders the going up of the Temple; if this one were but took away, all other would quickly become a Plain. They are very injurious to the publick Good, that go on in a Course of Sinning, against so gracious a GOD, that does such great Things for us. *One Sinner destroys much Good, as the wise Man speaks.*

(3.) UNITED

(3.) UNITED *Spirits*, and a sweet Harmony of Affections, graciously consorting together, would help forward the Cause of *Israel*. Jars and Dissensions amongst *Christians* sound very harshly; For the Divisions of *Reuben*, there were great Thoughts of Heart. What is there can give greater Advantage to an Enemy, than to see *Israelites* fall out amongst themselves? You may learn more Wisdom of them that are wiser in their Generation, than the Children of Light; what a strait Union and Confederacy have they among themselves? *Gebal*, and *Ammon*, and *Amalek*, the *Philistines*, with them that dwell at *Tyre*. These Scales of *Leviathan* (as that in *Job* is usually allegoriz'd) are shut together as with a close Seal. And if they should be at Variance and Discord among themselves; yet they have a sure Way of Reconciliation, by a joynt Opposition of the Godly. *Ephraim* against *Manasseh*, and *Manasseh* against *Ephraim*, both against *Judah*. *Herod* and *Pilate* made Friends in crucifying *Christ*. If wicked Men can agree in opposing Goodness, why should not *Christians* in helping forward Goodness?

ALL ye that come out to the Help of the LORD, to the Help of the LORD against the Mighty; come with united Hearts, and agreeing Spirits. Why should there be Strife between you, seeing you are Brethren?

AND then consider; What will not united Forces do, when you shall joyn to the Work of the LORD with one Consent, with one Shoulder? What is it that this Union won't bring to pass? It will strike Terror to the Church's Enemies, and strengthen the Hearts of Friends: It will mightily promote the publick Good, and tend to the Glory of *Jerusalem*. If Men would but lay out themselves, and their several Gifts and Abilities in one general Aim for the

Advantage of their Master, and Good of their Fellow-Servants; what glorious Times should we then see?

(4.) I MIGHT add that, *with outward Aid* too, you are bound to promote the publick Good, with liberal Contribution to relieve the Necessity of the *Christians*, as the Church of *Macedonia* gave above her Abilities.

AND now for a Word of Application.

I. It is for the just Reproof of most Men, that mind not at all the publick Good: How do they think to avoid the Curse of *Meroz*, seeing they *come not out to the Help of the LORD*? There is a Principle of corrupt Self-Love in Men, that makes them of narrow and contracted Spirits: All their Aims are for themselves; they do not mind the Good of the Church. If they hear but of a worldly Loss, some Ship cast away, and their Estate be weakened, this will pierce their Spirits; 'twill darken their Joy: But they can hear of Ruins of the Church, the Breaches of *Sion*; and not be moved with it. Men are more affected with their own private Good than with the publick; and more moved with private Miseries than publick. If they themselves be in the least Danger, or some of their near Friends, then you shall have Mourning, and Sighing, and Lamentation: But if the Church lye a bleeding, and accounted as Sheep for the Slaughter; they can be merry enough for all this. O how many are there, that this bitter Curse of *Meroz* will fall heavy upon! And upon your Days of Humiliation, be sure to humble yourselves for this; your Want of a publick Spirit, your not praying for the Peace of *Jerusalem*. How do you know but that, if you had sent up more Prayers to Heaven, GOD might have freed
the

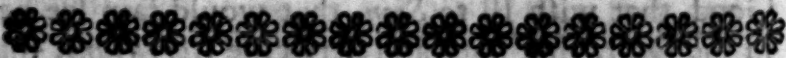
the distressed *Christians* by this Time? As they are guilty of the *Christians* Blood in an high Degree, that shed it in a most inhuman Manner; so I know not how they can excuse themselves from some Guilt of it, that do not help them by Prayers and Endeavours as much as in them lies.

2. It is against all such as are in a Kind of Indifferency and Neutrality; they neither are for one nor other. What is this but the very same Case with *Meroz*? *Meroz* did not fight against *Israel*, it did not fight for the *Canaanites*; no, but it did not come out to the Help of *Israel*, and therefore it has this bitter Curse. Vain Men! that think to content themselves with this, that they do not hurt! But every Man that does not Good, does Hurt; he must do either one or other; the Soul is not idle, it is either doing Good or Evil.

SUPPOSE that a Man did no Hurt, yet this is not enough, unless he does Good too; for there are Sins of Omission, as well as of Commission. Not doing of publick Good is a publick Hurt.

If there be such a bitter Curse upon *Meroz* for their Negligence and Remissness in Duty, for not coming out against the Mighty; what severe Judgments shall be poured out upon all them that come out against the LORD, that are against the publick Good, that wish Ill to *Sion*, that would fain see her in the Dust, that hate and persecute *Christians*, that oppose the Power of Religion, and the Life of the Gospel, that are in the very Gall of Bitterness? All the Curses that are written, and not written, shall flame against them; and the Vials of GOD's fiercest Wrath shall be emptyed upon them. *Meroz's* Curse is bitter; but in respect of theirs, sweet and easy.

BLESS GOD for Men of publick Spirits ; for Zerubbabel's and Joshua's, such as are building God a Temple : Pray GOD to encrease the Number of publick Spirits, such as may come out to the Help of the LORD. As there's a great and bitter Curse laid upon Meroz for being negligent in the Cause of GOD, so there are choice and eminent Blessings for such as are forward and active in it. GOD will abundantly recompence all the Labour of Love, which any shall shew for his Name ; their Labour shall not be in Vain in the LORD.



Spiritual



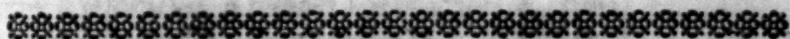
Spiritual Opticks:

OR, A

G L A S S

DISCOVERING

The Weakness and Imperfection
of a CHRISTIAN'S Knowledge
in this Life.



I COR. xiii. 12.

*For now we see through a Glass darkly ;
but then Face to Face : Now I know in
Part, but then shall I know even as also
I am known.*

ST. PAUL that was of a piercing Eye, and had
as clear an Insight into the Mysteries of Salva-
tion, as any other ; whose Soul was always
mounting towards that third Heaven, whither he
had once been rapt, and had there heard Words that
neither could nor might be uttered ; yet here grants

the Imperfection of his Knowledge, those weak and shadowy Apprehensions which he had of the Divine Majesty, while he *saw through a Glass darkly*; and encourages himself with the Consideration of the full and clear Vision, which we shall have of him hereafter, when we *shall see GOD Face to Face* in Glory. Without any farther Preamble we'll open the Words of the Text, that we may see this Glass clearly.

OUR Apostle here advances Charity to the highest Pitch of Commendation, as a triumphant Grace, a Grace that had Eternity stamped upon it. It outlives Faith, for that gives Place to Vision; it outlasts Hope, for that is swallowed up in Fruition; Prophecies shall vanish, and Tongues shall be silenced, and Knowledge shall pass away: For it is weak and imperfect here, it is in its Minority; yea, in its Infancy: *When I was a Child, I spake as a Child.* 'Tis cloudy and obscure here; *For now we see through a Glass darkly.*

Now we see, &c. Now that the Gospel beams out upon us with a powerful and glorious Ray. It was likely that at the first peeping out of heavenly Light, at the Evangelical Day-break, before the Shadows were fully scattered, there would be some Obscurity; but it has shined out brighter and brighter 'till perfect Day, and yet still we see thus darkly.

SECONDLY, (which is the true and genuine meaning) Now whilst we are in this House of our earthly Tabernacle; whilst the Understanding of a Man, which the wise Man calls, *The Candle of the LORD*, while it is hid in the Lanthorn of the Body: 'Till this Partition Wall be beaten down, we cannot see *GOD Face to Face*. He that will shoot high may aim
at

at a Star, but he must not think to hit it. Alas ! Now when the Soul does but *try the Wing*, and flutter towards Heaven, 'tis presently pulled down with an earthly Body ; 'tis so deprest here, as it can hardly look up to Heaven : How then shall it see *GOD Face to Face* ?

Now *we see through a Glass*. We that have an holy Unction that teacheth us all Things ; we that have many secret Whisperings and Breathings of the holy Spirit, that *leads us into all Truth* ; we that are acquainted with the Mind of GOD, that have had many a gracious Look from Him, yet *we see but darkly*. No Wonder that the Sun's too bright for Owls, when Eagles are dazled with it ; 'tis like that such as are Aliens from the Commonwealth of *Israel*, will be wholly ignorant of these great Things, when they that are nighest GOD, know them but in Part ; if *the Sons of the Morning*, the *Children of Light*, see so darkly, then surely a Child of Darkness will see nothing at all : If *Paul* now a glorious Apostle see no more, what could he see when he was a furious Persecutor, before the Scales fell from his Eyes ?

THIRDLY, We that are no Novices in *Christianity*, but have made much Progress in the Ways of Religion, yet *we see but darkly*. 'Twas likely at the first opening of the Soul's Eye, at the first Cast of it upon heavenly Things, that then 'twould not see so clearly. But it hath been long fixed upon GOD, eying of his Goodness, gazing upon the Riches of his Grace, viewing all his Ways, looking at and prying into his several Dealings ; and yet still it sees thus darkly. And if a tall and eminent *Christian* see so little, what shall a Babe see, a new-born Babe ? If a vigorous and sparkling Eye see no clearer, what shall a weak distempered Eye see ? If an experienced
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Apostle,

Apostle, a *Paul* see no more; what shall a new Disciple see, a *Nicodemus* that comes by Night? He must needs see but darkly.

THE Word is but once more used in the New Testament, *James* i. 23. and there can be no doubt but there 'tis taken for a Looking-Glass. And so it is here; our dark imperfect Knowledge of God is set forth by *seeing in a Glass*.

1. BECAUSE 'tis no immediate Vision: The Object is not primarily and immediately presented to the Eye, but by the Conveyance of the Looking-Glass, which is a silent Interpreter of the Object. And such is our Knowledge of God here, and such our Communion with Him; only some broken Beams of Glory, some Glimses of his Presence scattered here and there, in this Ordinance, and in that, Glasses of his own making, Means of his proper Institution.

2. 'Tis a weak and imperfect Vision: For, First, according to some, only the Shape and Resemblance of the Thing is seen; the Effigies of the Object drawn with the Pencil of a Beam is presented to the Eye. And, Secondly, the Beam begins to be weary, and is ready to faint; it gives a weak and languishing Representation; 'tis an imperfect Vision. And O how dark is our Knowledge of God here! What poor Manifestations have we of his Presence, in Comparison of that Sight which we look for hereafter! When his Essence shall be display'd with a most glorious Emphasis?

3. SEEING through a Glass is a vanishing and transient Vision, as St. *James* expresses it; *A Man having seen his natural Face in a Glass, goes his Way, and presently forgets what manner of Man he was.*

A dying

A dying Species could not make any strong Impression. One direct View of an Object is more full and satisfactory, than the often seeing it through a Glass.

OUR Apostle hath applied it to our Purpose; *Knowledge passes away*, in respect of that weak and imperfect Way of Knowledge which we have here; for thus St. Paul glosses upon his own Text; *When that which is perfect is come, then that which is imperfect shall be done away.*

AN Ænigma, or Riddle, is properly an Allegory with a Mask on; it is a borrowed Speech and a cloudy Speech. A knotty intricate Speech sealed up and locked from vulgar Apprehensions, that's a Riddle: And our Knowledge of GOD here is thus cloudy and enigmatical, and that if you take it in those three several Ways which are usually given of it:

First, by Way of Removal or Negation, when we take away all such Things as are inconsistent with a Deity. And thus the Scripture riddles him forth; *with him is no Beginning of Days, nor End of Life. He is not a Man that he should lie, or the Son of Man that He should repent. With Him is no Variableness nor Shadow of Turning, &c.* Now you will easily grant that this is a dark and cloudy Knowledge, when we cannot tell you what a Thing is, but what it is not.

SECONDLY, when we conceive of Him in a superlative Way, in a Way of Eminency and Transcendency. Many divine Perfections are scattered and broken amongst the Creatures, as the same Face may be represented in several Glasses; and all the Excellencies of the Creatures are collected, and
meet

meet eminently in God, as several Faces may be seen in one Glass. The Creatures must be winnowed from all Imperfections, and the finest and choicest of them must be taken to give some weak Resemblance of a Deity; the Ruddiness of the Rose, and the Purity of the Lilly; nay, the Top and Excellency of the Creation must be brought to shadow out the Spouse's Beauty; and yet that this Knowledge is weak and imperfect, will easily appear.

1. Because these inferior Beings are so gross and material, that the purest of them is meer Dregs, if compared with so pure an Essence; its Gold becomes Dross, its Silver Tin. And when heavenly Perfections are set out by the Creatures Excellencies, it is but a stooping low to human Capacity: The Soul would be dazzled at so bright a Majesty, unless he were clouded with such Expressions.

2. This Way of beholding Him breeds rather Admiration than begets Knowledge; for when we hear of so goodly an Essence that hath all Excellencies bound up in one vast Volume, we wonder what that should be: And Admiration is at the best but *a stupify'd Kind of Knowledge*. 3. This rather sets the Soul a longing, then gives it any true Satisfaction. For when we hear there is so choice a Thing, we long to know what it is; which was a Sign we knew it not before, or but very weakly. For true Knowledge satiates the Soul, there is a Complacency and Acquiescence in it, especially when it is conversant about so high an Object; so that this Way is but dark and full of Riddles.

THIRDLY, when we consider of God by Way of Causality, in that vast Influence which He hath upon all Things, as with Him are *springing Beams of Goodness, and overflowing Effusions of Light*. As He is a Fountain-Essence continually bubbling forth, from whence the several Drops of inferior Beings have

have their Original: And as He is the main Spring that sets the Wheels of those petty Entities on Working: For *in Him we live, move, and have our Being*. Now this rather shews us that there is a God, than what He is; that there is indeed such a prime Being, a Self-Being, an All-Being, a Giver of Being, but still we are to seek what this Being is; so that these Apprehensions of Him are very weak and shadowy.

BUT *then*] *Then* when a believing Soul returns to GOD that gave it, it sees Him Face to Face, and fixes its Eye upon Him to all Eternity. As soon as ever the Soul is unsheathed from the Body, it glisters most gloriously; as soon as ever it is unclouded from Corruption, it shall beam forth most oriently; as soon as it is let loose from this Cage of Clay, it sings most melodiously: Nothing hinders a *Christian* from a Sight of GOD Face to Face, but the Interposition of a gross, earthly Body; it is Death's Office, to break down this Wall of Separation, that the Soul may be admitted into the Presence of GOD.

SECONDLY, *Then*, at that general Day of Refreshment, when GOD shall sit upon his Throne in Beauty and Excellency, as a Center of Light, streaming forth to the glorious Circumference of the four and twenty Elders, that sit around the Throne.

FACE to Face] This is opposed to *seeing in a Glass*, 1. As a more immediate Vision: 2. A clear and perfect Vision: 3. As a permanent and eternal Vision.

IN the Words there is a plain Allusion to that Place in *Numbers* xii. 8. where GOD promises to manifest

manifest Himself to his Servant *Moses*, *Face to Face*.

AND yet we must not think that by Virtue of this Promise, *Moses* had so full a Vision of GOD, as we expect hereafter in Glory. No, it is spoken only of GOD's communicating Himself to him in a clearer Way than He would to any of the Prophets: He would speak to them in Riddles, to *Jeremy* in the Riddle of an Almond-Tree, of a Seething-Pot, and so the rest of the Prophets; but He conversed familiarly with *Moses*, as a Man talks to his Friend Face to Face. And as for *Moses's* Petition in *Exod.* xxxiii. 18. *I beseech Thee shew me thy Glory*, it was only a Desire that GOD would shew Himself in some corporeal Resemblance, so as to assure him of his Presence, that that would accompany him. And this is GOD's Answer, *I will make all my Goodness pass before Thee*. Besides, there is a plain Denial; GOD tells him he cannot see his Face; *Moses* saw no more of GOD than the back Parts of His Glory; he saw them in a corporeal Resemblance, and we in an intellectual Vision. You see the Allusion this Place hath to that in *Numbers*.

Now as for the Meaning of the Words, *but then Face to Face*.

1. IT is not meant of seeing *Christ* in his human Nature Face to Face, as *Job* speaks, *These Eyes shall see my Redeemer*: For thus the Wicked also shall see Him with Terror and Amazement, when the Mountains shall be esteemed an easier Burthen, if they could but cover them from the Face of an angry Saviour that will frown them into Hell.

2. I TAKE it to be meant of an Intellectual Be-
holding the very Essence of GOD, according to that,

1 *John*

1 John iii. 2. *When He shall appear, we shall be like unto Him, and see Him as He is.* And yet it can by no Means be a comprehensive Vision : For that's a meer Repugnancy, that a finite Creature should grasp an infinite Essence. Or by *the Face of GOD* may be meant his Glory and Perfections ; for the Face is the Throne of Beauty.

IN the following Words St. Paul gives a plainer Expression of that which before he had spoke more darkly.

Now I see through a Glass darkly, now I know in Part ; but then Face to Face, but then I shall know even as also I am known. As when two sees one another Face to Face, the one knows the other by Sight, as he is known by him.

Now I know in Part] St. Paul on set Purpose changes the Person, that he may acknowledge his own Imperfection. He had included himself before, *Now we see through a Glass darkly* ; but he will do it more apparently, *now I know in Part* ; and when so great an Apostle inculcates his own Defects, methinks none should boast of their Self-Sufficiency.

2. *Now I know in Part]* Here is a Reason of our Imperfection here : *If the Light that's in thee be Darkness, how great is that Darkness?* Knowledge is a leading Principle, and all Graces follow it in Proportion : If we knew GOD more, we should obey Him more ; if we knew more of his Goodness, we should Love Him more ; if we knew more of his Majesty, we should Fear Him more ; if more of his Faithfulness, we should Trust Him more ; nay, if we knew Him perfectly, all these would be perfect :

perfect: When Knowledge is compleat, Obedience will be exact.

3. Now *I know in Part*: According to the Syriac, *parum de multo*. 1. Little of that I should know. 2. Little of that I might know. 3. Little of that others know. 4. Little of that I desire to know. 5. Little of that I shall know in Glory.

4. Now *I know in Part*. 1. Religion is no Fancy, Opinion, or conjectural Thing: No, we have a certain Knowledge of GOD and his Ways here; we see through a Glass, though it be but darkly: There is Truth in a Riddle, though it be obscure. 2. A *Christian* begins his Acquaintance with GOD here: He that knows Him not *in Part here*, shall never see Him *Face to Face in Glory*. We have here the first Glimpse of Heaven, a Prospect of *Canaan*, the Preface of Happiness, the Initials of Glory.

BUT then *I shall know*, Τότε δὲ ἐκτελέσωμαι.] Ἐπὶ γνώσει; is bringing me better acquainted with a Thing that I knew before, a more exact Viewing of an Object that I saw before afar off. That little Portion of Knowledge which we had here shall be much improved, our Eye shall be raised to see the same Things more strongly and clearly. Our Knowledge here was but a Spark of the Light that shall be. When the Soul shall say, as the Queen of Sheba did to Solomon, in 1 Kings x. *It was a true Report that I heard in mine own Land of thine Acts, and of thy Wisdom; howbeit I scarce believed the Words until I came, and mine Eyes had seen it, and behold the Half was not told me. Happy are thy Men, O happy are these thy Servants that stand continually before thee.*

EVEN

EVEN as also I am known. The Particle *καθὼς*, as, is not a Note of Equality, but of Similitude, as in many other Places.

AND thus much may serve for Explication of the Text, for clearing the Glass, for opening the *Ænigma*. If you now look into the Words, you'll find them full of Spiritual Opticks. Here is *Vision Reflex*; for now we see thro' a Glass darkly: And here is *Vision Direct*; but then Face to Face. We will begin with the first: Now we see through a Glass darkly; and here I shall present many Glasses to your View.

FIRST, In the Glass of the *Creature*. This is a common and obvious Glass presented to every one's View, and there are some Glimmerings of common Light, diffused among all, by which they may see into it.

OUR Apostle shews us this Glass in *Rom. i. 20*. *The invisible Things of God*. The Sense is, That the invisible Things of God are seen by the Creatures, or by the Creation. From the first Infancy of the World, ever since it was created, the eternal Power and Godhead have manifested themselves, and the prime Cause hath been very apparent in those Effects of his, which could not possibly be produced by any inferior Being.

THIS vast Volume of the Creatures set out by God Himself without any *Errata* in it, was printed in so fair a Character, as he that ran might read it; and the least Letter in it made Shew of a most divine Impression. But alas! Sin, besides weakening of the Soul's Eye, hath soiled and defaced the Book; and hence we come to see in it so darkly. And yet still the Letters are visible and carry with them the

Print of a Deity. The World is, as one calls it, *Ænigma Dei*. And it is full of Looking-Glasses: For GOD hath communicated several Resemblances of Himself to the Creature, as the Face sheds that Image upon the Glass whereby itself is presented. I need not speak of the blessed Angels, those pure and crystal Mirrors, what glorious Representations they give of their Creator: Look but into yourselves, and you will find immortal Souls shewing forth that Image according to which they were made; or if you will look up to that vast and polished Looking-Glass, you will see *The Heavens declaring the Glory of GOD, and the Firmament shewing his handy Work*. Or cast but an Eye upon the the poorest and most abject Being, and even there you will find some faint Resemblances of a Deity. But the Atheist shuts his Eyes; what should a blind Man do with a Looking-Glass? And yet sometimes there are lightening Flashes of Terror darted into Him, and he begins with the Devils to *believe and tremble*. The Papists, as if there were not Glasses enough of GOD's making, must have Images of their own to put them in Mind of GOD; their painted Glasses: But surely they see through these very darkly. The Heathens they shall be judged for not ordering their Lives according to this Glass; for resisting those Reliques of primitive Light that shined out so strongly upon them. Well, here are Glasses, but we see them very darkly, and that by Reason of a double Defect.

1. IN the Glass.

'Tis true, some of GOD's Attributes here clearly shew themselves; his Power and Sovereignty; yea, his Wisdom, and Goodness too; but those sweetest Manifestations of his Love, the Treasures of free Grace and infinite Mercy, the whole Plot of the Gospel,

Gospel, not the least Shadow of these is to be found. Now for this very Cause, the Gentiles in *Eph. ii. 12*, are called *Atheists*, because they were without the Knowledge of GOD in *Christ*. You know they had a goodly Company of Gods, an whole Troop of Deities: But they were without GOD in *Christ*, and hence they are stiled, *without GOD in the World*.

2. *IN the Eye.*

1. ADAM in Innocency had a glorious Soul full of Light, bright and sparkling Eyes, *πυρὶ λαμπυρόντι ὕμνῳ*. He could read the smallest Print, the least Jot and Tittle in the Book of Nature. See how quickly he tumbles over the vast Volume, and in a Name gives a brief Gloss upon every Creature, a concise Epitome of their natural Histories. He had a fair Portion of Knowledge, if he could have been contented with it. But he would fain have more, he must needs be tasting of the Tree of Knowledge; and hence springs our Ignorance; the Soul hath ever since been darkened and dim-sighted. Perhaps it can see some goodly capital Letters, some fair flourish'd Character; but there are Multitudes of Beings in a smaller Print, that it takes no Notice of.

2. THE Soul might see more, if it would employ itself more, and look oftner into the Glass of the Creatures. Meditation would raise the Creature higher, and distil Sweetness out of every Object. The Soul is busy with every Thing it sees, as busy as a Bee; it goes from Flower to Flower, and extracts most precious Sweetness.

3. SOME Eyes have been dazzled too much with the Glitterings of the Creature, so as to take the

Servant for the Master; and have been so much in admiring the Glass, that they forgot the glorious Beauty that it represented. What Worship and Adoration hath the Sun had? Even almost as much as the great Creator of Heaven and Earth; strange that they should see so darkly, as not to discern the Face from the Veil that covers it. For the Sun is at best but the Shadow of GOD; a meer Spot, a Cloud, if compared with so bright an Essence; and as he saith notably, The Sun's Worshippers must need be *Atheists in the Night-Time*. You have seen the Glass of the *Creatures*, and how in it we see very darkly.

SECONDLY, in *Learning's* Glass. Learning brightens the intellectual Eye, and clarifies the Soul; the *Hebrews* wise Men are חֲכָמִים, *aperti*, Men with Eyes open; and it sets a Man on higher Ground, and gives him a fairer Prospect of Beings, and many Advantages over others; they have Eyes and see not; but *these* see, and yet very darkly. What need I tell you how invincible Doubts blemish their brightest Notions? How the Naturalist's Head is non-pluss'd with an occult Quality, and he knows not how to take it off. How the choicest Moralists are paus'd, and cannot tell how to extricate themselves. Look up higher to *Metaphysicks*, which some stile *sembria Theologiæ*; but you may touch the Hem of its Garment long enough before you find any Virtue coming from it. converse but with the Schoolmens Works, and there you shall meet voluminous Riddles. 'Tis their grand Employment to tie a Knot, and then see if they can undo it; to frame an Enemy, and then triumph over him; to make an Objection, and then answer it if they can: There are Speculations enough, but if you see thro' them, it will be very darkly.

BUT if you could see very clearly in all these, yet how weak and insufficient are they to acquaint you with the great Mysteries of Godliness?

1. SOME such as have been most eminent in them, have had Wits of Elevation situated as upon a Cliff, but how little have they seen of Heaven, and heavenly Things! *Aristotle* with the rest of the Heathens, What uncertain Notions had they of a Deity? We are beholding to their dying Speeches for most of their Divinity.

2. MANY under the Light of the Gospel, and furnish'd with Helps of human Learning; how strangely unacquainted are they with the Knowledge of *Christ* crucified! A plain experienced Christian (notwithstanding all their auxiliary Forces) only by the Help of a Bible, will put a whole Army of them to Flight. And yet methinks none should be so silly and malicious as to put the Fault in Learning, whereas there is no greater Vicinity than between Truth and Goodness; and Heaven is full of Knowledge, as it is of Holiness.

3. SCIENCES themselves are weak and imperfect Things, and therefore as our Apostle tells us, Knowledge must be abolish'd, and Tongues which are the *Vehicles* of Sciences, shall pass away. So then in this Glas we see but darkly.

THIRDLY, In the Glas of the *Scriptures*. This is a pure and spotless Glas representing the Will of GOD unto us, an eternal Glas that shall never be broken, more durable than Heaven itself: *David* was looking in this Glas Day and Night.

THERE are many false flattering Glasses in the World; but here the Soul may see its Face in a
most

most exact Resemblance: It will shew the least-Spot and Deformity; the Sinsfulness of an idle Word, of a vain Thought, of a first Motion tho' without Consent, the least Tendencies to Sin, the first Bubbings up of Corruption. It deals so plainly, that many are offended with it, and swell the more against it; and thus *Sin takes Occasion by the Commandment*, as *Rom. vii.* Fond *Lais* breaks her Looking-Glass, because it shews the Wrinkles in her Face: Gives the Reason, *Me cernere talem qualis sum nolo, qualis eram nequeo.* Well, the Law that's a Glass to shew us our Spots, cannot wipe them off; but the Gospel is a pure Well of Salvation, there one may see them and wash them too.

IN that evangelical Mirror you may see the Face of a Saviour, coming in an amiable Way with Smiles of Love, with Offers of Grace and saving Mercy. Nay, the Gospel is called *the Face of Jesus Christ*, 2 *Cor. iv. 6.* As suppose a Glass when a Man had once look'd into it, should keep a permanent and unvanishing Image of his Face, tho' he himself afterwards were absent; we might well say, There was the Face of such a Man; the Gospel is such a Glass, *Christ* hath look'd into it, and shed his Image upon it, and ever since it hath given most glorious Representations of Him: And till we come to Heaven itself, we cannot meet with more full Manifestations of GOD and *Christ*, and all the Mysteries of Salvation, than in the Word of GOD; and yet here we see but darkly.

FOR if we consider them under the Old Testament, how long was there Comfort lock'd up in that *Ænigma*, that primitive Promise, which was the first Dawning of the Gospel; *The Seed of the Woman shall break the Serpent's Head?* And when
Truth

Truth began to shew itself in some fuller Discoveries, yet still it was mix'd with much Obscurity.

THEY had a Two-fold Glafs.

1. IN the Glafs of the Ceremonies they saw very darkly. We could not look for much Light where there were so many Shadows; where there were so many Veils, they could not see Face to Face. That the *Jews* worshipped a Cloud for their GOD, was a mere Calumny; but that they worshipped their GOD in a Cloud we will easily grant, for *all our Fathers were under the Cloud*, 1 Cor. x. 1. The Ceremonial Law was nothing else but an Heap of Riddles: Who amongst them could tell the Meaning of them? Nay, it is well if we that have the Type and Antitype meeting together, can give a just Explanation of some of them. Well, this Glafs is now broken; for Ceremonies, like false Looking-Glasses, represent the Object with too much Shadow; and yet still the Scarlet Whore will be dressing herself by them, because like flattering Glasses they make her seem fairer and more beautiful. *Majorésq; cadunt altis de montibus umbrae.*

2. IN the Glafs of the Prophecies. Here they might see the Presence of a deferr'd Deliverance, they might see the Face of a promised *Messias*. *Buxtorf* tells us, That he is persuaded this is one main Reason why the *Jews* are so ignorant of the *Messias*, because they are so little vers'd in the Prophets; they spend their whole Time upon the Law, but will not cast an Eye upon them: He speaks of the modern *Jews*. GOD in much Mercy hath given them Glasses, and they will not vouchsafe to look in them; they were always an obdurate

rate and stiff-necked People, rebelling against the Prophets, and they go on to fill up the Sins of their Fathers. Well, but the *Seers* themselves saw in a Riddle, they saw them very darkly.

FOR, 1. A Prophecy in the Bud is not so easily seen as when it shoots out further, and spreads itself in larger Growth: Such Passages in *Isaiab* as seem to us clear as the Day, were to them dark and enigmatical: And we see how obscure St. *John's* Prophecy seems to us. And the Devil, who was always God's Ape, over-imitated here; for his Oracles were wrapt up in so many Clouds, and withall so full of Fallacies, as none ever could tell their Meaning 'till Event had given the Interpretation. The Prince of Darkness would make all his Sayings wear his Livery: Divine Prophecies are as clear as Crystal, if compared with his cloudy Oracles.

2. PROPHECIES at best are but weak and imperfect Things, and therefore they also shall be abolished, no Need of them in Heaven: They were very beneficial to the Church militant, to acquaint her with approaching Judgments, and prepare her for intended Mercies; but when Happiness is present and compleat, no Need of them then in the Church triumphant.

THUS you have seen how they under the Law saw but darkly: And if God's peculiar People had so little Knowledge of Him, in what gross and palpable Ignorance did they live that had none of this his Light shining upon them: for in Judah was God known, and his Name was famous in Israel. He hath not dealt so with every Nation, neither hath the Heathen Knowledge of his Law.

AND now if we look upon ourselves that live under the Light of the Gospel, even we in this Sun-shine see but darkly.

1. THERE are many *evangelical Riddles*, a God incarnate, a crucified Saviour; which are such,
1. As the Angels themselves see darkly, and therefore are still prying to see more. 2. Reason that great Patron of Unbelief wrangles against them; and yet Reason itself will dictate thus much, That the Mysteries of Religion should be above the Reach of Reason. 3. The greatest Part of the World reject them: The *Greeks* esteem them Foolishness: They think there is not so much in them as in a Riddle; in that there is some hidden Sense, but these are plain Foolishness in their Esteem; the *Jews* stumble at a crucified Saviour, and yet themselves were the Crucifiers of Him. The Veil of the Temple rent at his Death; but the Veil is still upon their Hearts, and yet that e're long shall be rent too: And *they shall see Him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn, and be in Bitterness*; and confess, *We crucified our Love, we crucified our Saviour*.

2. THERE are many *Practical Truths* which are mere Riddles to carnal Spirits; as to forsake all for a persecuted *Christ*, to cut off Right Hands, pluck out Right Eyes, pray for Enemies, not to do Evil that Good may come thereof: These Principles they can hardly digest; and there are many Christian Privileges which they know not what to make of, Assurance of GOD's Favour, Communion with Him, hidden Manna, Joy in the Holy Ghost and unspeakable. These and such like puzzle their Apprehensions; for they never enter'd into the Heart of a natural Man to conceive, it is too narrow for them to enter.

3. THERE

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3. THERE

3. THERE are many *Passages* which to Christians themselves are dark and enigmatical, such as we cannot easily understand. The Book of the *Revelation* is all veil'd with Obscurity, the first Thing we meet with almost are seven Seals: It is full of hidden Secrets, and who is there that can unseal the Book? Our Adversaries the *Papists* catch at this, and are ready with a double Inference: The Scriptures are enigmatical; therefore clear them with Traditions, therefore keep them from the People.

BUT, 1. When we speak of the Scripture's Darkness, it is but comparatively in Respect of those bright Manifestations we shall have of God hereafter. A Pearl may be clear and orient, and yet dark in Respect of a Star. A Star may be bright, and yet obscure if compared with the Sun.

2. ALL Truths belonging to the Essence of a Christian, are plain: And there is an assisting Spirit, which though they perhaps may scoff at, and some others may unjustly pretend to, yet, without Doubt it shall lead God's People into all Truth.

3. ARE their Traditions so clear and crystalline, as that we shall see in them better than in the Word? If you cannot see in a pellucid Stream, do you think to see in a muddy standing Pool?

BUT, Secondly, The Scriptures are enigmatical, therefore keep them from the People. Nay, rather explain them to them: Therefore set up a faithful Ministry, whose *Lips may preserve Knowledge*, and acquaint them with the Mysteries of Salvation, and open to them these hidden Oracles. And let the People themselves *search the Scriptures, dig for Knowledge as for Silver, and for*

Wis-

Wisdom as hid Treasure. Again, they had better see in a Glass, tho' but darkly, than not to see at all; Truth in a Cloud, in a Riddle is more amiable than a black and palpable Ignorance.

THIRDLY, They keep the Scriptures from them, not because they see in them so darkly, but lest they should see in them too clearly; and above all they lock up the *Revelation*, not as it is obscure, but because it threatens the seven Hills so much. And thus we have look'd upon the third Particular, the Glass of the *Scriptures*.

FOURTHLY, In the Glass of Providence. Here GOD's glorious Attributes shine forth, his Wisdom, Justice, Goodness, and the rest of that glorious Constellation. And Providence sets before us Examples, they are Glasses in which we may see either the Beauty of Holiness, or else Sin's Deformity. And it is no small Felicity of this latter Age, that we have the Use of these Glasses, the Benefit of so many former Examples; and yet we see in them but darkly, they are a *Cloud of Witnesses*, as it is, *Heb. xii. 1.* tho' in another Sense. Providence is very mysterious, and there is no readier Way to Atheism than to question it, when we cannot give a sufficient Account of it. The *Indians* have a Custom once a Year to cast a golden Bushel into the Sea: And thus they think they set a Measure and bound to its proud Waves, so as it shall not invade their Land. Their Custom is ridiculous enough, and yet they are far more vain that go about to circumscribe an immense Being with the narrow Compass of their Reason. Audacious Men, that go about to set Providence a Platform, which if it shall transgress, it presently passes the Bounds of Justice.

SAINT *Paul* that could have dived as deep as another, and brought up many precious pearly Observations with him, yet dares not venture in, but standing aloof off upon the Shore, admires the vast and boundless Ocean, and as one amazed, and almost swallowed up with the very Consideration of it, cries out, *O the Depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of GOD! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out!* ἀνεξήχιστα, his Ways are in the Deep; there is no *trace* of them, not the least Print, no tracing of a Deity. That GOD should shine out only upon some few Spots of Ground with the Light of the Gospel, and shut up the rest in palpable Darknes; that he should suffer his dearest Children to be wrong'd and insulted, when Wickedness in the mean While triumphs securely: These and many such like are Riddles of Providence, we see in this Glas darkly.

FIFTHLY, In the Glas of Faith. Here we see through a Glas: For Faith is a sure Perspective-Glas, by which *Abraham's* aged Eye saw *Christ's* Day though afar off; and the rest of the Saints saw Him from a Distance, and yet embrac'd Him: A Glas by which *Moses* saw Him that was invisible. It is a colour'd Glas, and does colour the Object: It can see a Mercy in a Judgment, and Deliverance in a Captivity, Help in an Exigency: And Promises they are Faith's Glasses, and they speak as the Looking-Glas in the Greek Epigram, *If you look on me I look upon you; if you apply me, I belong unto you.*

AND yet we see here but darkly: For Faith itself (not to speak of those many Doubtings and Waverings that often accompany it, is opposed to Vision, 2 Cor. v. 7. *We walk by Faith, and*
not

not by Sight. Faith as it lives in the Mount, (for *in the Mount will the LORD be seen*) so it dies in the Mount too like *Moses*, it never enters into the Land of Promise.

SIXTHLY, The Glass of the Sacraments. Such great and transcendent Mysteries as the Apprehensions of Angels cannot reach unto, are here presented to the Senses.

BAPTISM, that's a Looking-Glass where the first Beam of GOD's favourable Countenance shews itself, the first Expression of his Love to a sinful Creature. The Laver under the Law was made of Looking-Glasses; and the Laver of Regeneration under the Gospel is itself a Looking-glass, where you may see a GOD in Covenant with you, and yet He does not shew Himself with a spreading and immediate Ray, but only in a sacramental Reflexion: You may see Heaven in this Well of Salvation. As it was used by Way of Immersion, there was a Riddle of the Resurrection; as by Way of Sprinkling, there's a Riddle of Sanctification. You would say, It were no Wonder if I should tell you *the Infant* sees in it but darkly; but who is there *of riper Years* that looks on this Glass, or makes any Use of it? Who is there almost that spends a Thought upon his Baptism?

AND as for the Sacrament of the LORD's-Supper; why, here's a Glass that *Christ* left with his dear Spouse when He went away from her, in which she may still see his Face and be mindful of Him. *Do this in Remembrance of Me*, and *do it to put Me in Remembrance of you*: For τὸ ἐμὲ ἀνάμνησιν includes both. There is mutual Aspect, and reciprocal Glances between *Christ* and a believing

lieving Soul in the Sacrament. *Christ* looks upon the Soul with a gracious Eye, and the Soul looks upon Him with an Eye of Faith.

AND thus we have shewn you the several Glasses thro' which we see but darkly. There remains a Sight of GOD *Face to Face, to know as we are known.* But this hereafter.

READER,

*What this to know as we are known should be
The Author could not tell, but died to see.*

The End of N. Culverwell's WORKS.

6 JY 64



EXTRACTS
FROM THE
WORKS
OF

JOHN OWEN, D. D.

Some Time *Vice-Chancellor* of the Uni-
versity of CAMBRIDGE.



To which is prefix'd,

SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE.



W O R K S



THE

THE

LIFE

OF

JOHN OWEN, D.D.

DR. JOHN OWEN, was a great Man, and generally respected as a Scholar, a Gentleman, and a Divine. He was cast out of his Deanry of *Christ-Church* in *Oxford*, in 1659, not long after *Richard's* being made Protector; and liv'd privately afterwards at *Stadham* 'till he came to *London*. Mr. *Wood*, the *Oxonian*, who bore him no Good-will, thinks fit to own, *That the Doctor was a Person well skilled in the Tongues, Rabinnical Learning, and Jewish Rites and Customs; that he had a great Command of his English Pen, and was one of the most genteel and fairest Writers that appeared against the Church*

The LIFE of Dr. OWEN.

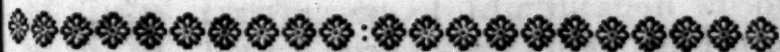
Church of England. But such as were not blinded with Prejudice, have freely own'd the Eminency of the Doctor's Learning and Abilities. He was a Man of universal Reading; and he had digested it. He was especially conversant in those Sciences that are assistant to Divinity; and Master of them in an unusual Degree. He was reckon'd the brightest Ornament of the University of *Oxford*, and for several Years successively was Vice-Chancellor there. When laid aside here, he had Thoughts of going into *New-England*, where he was invited to the Government of their University; but he was stopt by particular Orders from King CHARLES. He was also invited to be a Professor of Divinity in the United Provinces, but refused. He lived the latter Part of his Life in great Reputation, in and about the City of *London*; where he had a considerable Congregation, and was much respected by many Persons of Note and Eminence. On *St. Bartholomew's-Day*, 1683, he parted this Life, with a cheerful Hope of a better; and left behind him a great many valuable Writings.

6 JY 64

OF THE
MORTIFICATION
OF
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IN
BELIEVERS:

THE

NECESSITY, NATURE, and MEANS of it.

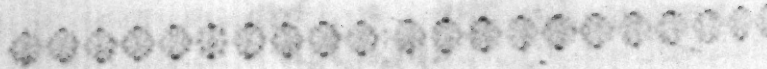
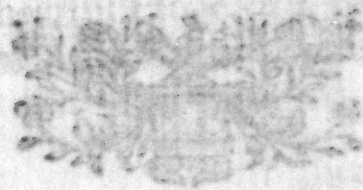


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The Mortification of SIN

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BELIEVERS, &c.



CHAP. I.

The Foundation of the ensuing Discourse.

THAT what I have to contribute to the carrying on of Mortification in Believers, may receive Order and Perspicuity, I shall lay the Foundation of it in those Words of the Apostle, *Rom. viii. 13. If ye by the Spirit do mortify the Deeds of the Flesh, ye shall live;* and reduce the Whole to an Improvement of the great evangelical Truth contained in them.

THE Apostle having made a Recapitulation of his Doctrine of Justification by Faith, and the blessed Condition of them, who are Partakers thereof,

v. I,

v. 1, 2, 3. of this Chapter, proceeds to improve it to the Holiness and Consolation of Believers.

IN the Words peculiarly designed for the Foundation of the ensuing Discourse, there is,

First, A Duty prescribed; *mortify the Deeds of the Body.*

Secondly, The Persons to whom it is prescribed; *ye, if ye mortify.*

Thirdly, A Promise annexed to that Duty, *ye shall live.*

Fourthly, The Means of the Performance of this Duty, *the Spirit; if ye through the Spirit.*

Fifthly, The Condition of the Whole, wherein Duty, Means and Promise, are contained, *if ye, &c.*

1. THE first Thing occurring in the Words, as they lie in the entire Proposition, is the conditional Note, *but if*. The certain Connexion that is between the Mortifying of the Deeds of the Body, and Living, is intimated in this conditional Particle. The Connection between Mortification, and Life, is not of Cause and Effect properly, *For eternal Life is the Gift of GOD, through Jesus Christ, Rom. vi. 23.* But of Means and End: GOD hath appointed this Means for the attaining that End, which He hath freely promised.

2. THE next Thing we meet with in the Words, is, the Persons to whom this is prescribed; and that is expressed in the Word *ye*, that is, ye Believers; ye to whom *there is no Condemnation, v. 1.* ye that are not in the Flesh, but in the Spirit, *v. 5.* who are
quicken'd

quickened by the Spirit of Christ, v. 10, 11. to you is this Duty prescribed; and this Description of the Persons, in Conjunction with the Duty, is the main Foundation of the ensuing Discourse.

3. THE principal efficient Cause of the Performance of this Duty, is the Spirit: The Spirit here is the Spirit of *Christ*, the Spirit of GOD, that *dwells in us, v. 9. that quickens us, v. 11. the Holy Ghost, v. 14. the Spirit of Adoption, v. 15. the Spirit that maketh Intercession for us, v. 26.* All other Ways of Mortification are Vain, all Helps leave us Helpless, it must be done by the Spirit.

4. THE Duty itself, *Mortify the Deeds of the Body*, is next to be remarked.

THREE Things are here to be enquired into; (1.) What is meant by the *Body*. (2.) What by the *Deeds of the Body*. (3.) What by *Mortifying* of them.

(1.) THE *Body*, in the Close of the *Verse*, is the same with the *Flesh* in the Beginning. *If ye live after the Flesh, ye shall die, but if ye Mortify the Deeds of the Body, that is, of the Flesh.* The *Body* then here is taken for that Corruption of our Natures, whereof the *Body*, in a great Part, is the Instrument; the very Members of the *Body* being made Servants unto Unrighteousness thereby.

(2.) THE *Deeds of the Body*: Though the outward Deeds are here only expressed, yet the Inward are chiefly intended, the *Ax is to be laid to the Root of the Tree*; the Deeds of the *Flesh* are to be mortified in their Causes; the Apostles calls them *Deeds*, as that which every Lust tends to; though it prove Abortive, it aims to bring forth a perfect Sin.

(3.) To mortify; *if ye put to Death*: A metaphorical Expression, taken from the putting of any living Thing to Death. To kill a Man, or any other living Thing, is to take away the Principle of all his Strength, Vigour and Power; so it is in this Case. Indwelling Sin is compared to a Person, a living Person, called *the old Man*, with his Faculties, and Properties, his Wisdom, Craft, Subtilty, Strength; this, says the Apostle, must be killed, put to Death, mortified, that is, have its Power, Life, Vigour, taken away by the Spirit.

(4.) THE Promise unto this Duty is Life: *Ye shall Live*, The Life promised, is opposed to the Death threatened in the Clause foregoing: If ye live after the Flesh, ye shall die; which the same Apostle elsewhere expresth, *Ye shall of the Flesh reap Corruption*, Gal. vi. 8. Or Destruction from God. Now perhaps the Word may not only intend eternal Life, but also the spiritual Life in *Christ*, which here we have, not as to the Essence and Being of it, which is already enjoyed by Believers, but as to the Comfort, and Vigour of it: Ye shall live, lead a vigorous, comfortable, spiritual Life here, and obtain eternal Life hereafter.



CHAP. II.

The Necessity of MORTIFICATION.

HAVING laid this Foundation, a brief Confirmation of the forementioned Deductions will lead me to what I chiefly intend.

I. THAT

I. THAT *Believers, who are freed from the condemning Power of Sin, ought yet to make it their Business to mortify the indwelling Power of Sin.*

So the Apostle, *Col. iii. 5. Mortify therefore your Members, which are upon Earth.* Whom speaks He to? Such as were *risen with Christ, v. 1.* Such as were *dead with Him, v. 3.* Do you Mortify, do you make it your daily Work? Cease not a Day from this Work, be killing Sin, or it will be killing you; your being dead with *Christ*, your being quickened with Him, will not excuse you from this Work. And our Saviour tells us, how his Father deals with every Branch in him that beareth Fruit, *He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more Fruit, John xv. 2.*

I. NEGLIGENCE in this Duty, casts the Soul into a perfect contrary Condition to that which the Apostle affirms was his, *2 Cor. iv. 16.* In these the inward Man perissheth, and the outward Man is renewed Day by Day. Sin is as the House of *David*, and Grace as the House of *Saul*. Exercise and Success are the two main Cherishers of Grace in the Heart; when it is suffered to lie still, it withers and decays; and Sin gets Ground towards the hardening of the Heart, *Heb. iii. 13.* By the Omission of this Duty, Grace withers, Lust flourisheth, and the Frame of the Heart grows worse and worse; and the LORD knows what desperate and fearful Issues it hath had with many: When poor Creatures will take Blow after Blow, Wound after Wound, Foil after Foil, and never rouse up themselves to a vigorous Opposition, can they expect any Thing, but to be hardened, through the *Deceitfulness of Sin*; and that their Souls should bleed to Death? *John ii. 8.*

2. IT is our Duty to be perfecting Holiness in the *Fear of the LORD*, 2 *Cor.* vii. 1. To be growing in Grace every Day, 1 *Pet.* ii. 2. Now this cannot be done without the daily Mortifying of Sin. Sin sets its Strength against every Act of Holiness, and against every Degree we grow to. Let not that Man think he makes any progress in Holiness, who walks over the Bellies of his Lusts; he who doth not kill Sin in his Way, takes no Steps towards his Journey's End. He who finds not Opposition from it, and who sets not himself in every Particular to its Mortification, is at Peace with it, not dying to it.

THIS then is the first general Principle of our ensuing Discourse: Notwithstanding the meritorious Mortification, of all and every Sin in the Cross of *Christ*, notwithstanding the real Foundation of universal Mortification laid in our first Conversion, by Conviction of Sin, Humiliation for Sin, and the Implantation of a new Principle, opposite to it; yet Sin doth so remain, so act, and work, even in Believers, that the constant daily Mortification of it, is incumbent on them. Before I proceed, I cannot but complain of many Professors of these Days; who instead of bringing forth such great and evident Fruits of Mortification as are expected, scarce bear any Leaves of it. There is indeed a broad Light fallen upon the Men of this Generation; and together therewith many spiritual Gifts communicated, which with some other Considerations have wonderfully enlarged the Bounds of Professors and Profession; both they and it, are exceedingly multiplied and encreased. Hence there is a Noise of Religion and religious Duties in every Corner; Preaching in abundance; so that if you will Measure the Number of Believers, by Light and Profession, the Church may have Cause to say, who hath

hath borne me all these? But now if you will take the Measure of them by this great discriminating Grace of *Christians*, perhaps you will find their Number not so multiplied. The good LORD send out a Spirit of Mortification to cure our Distempers, or we are in a sad Condition.

THERE are two Evils which certainly attend every unmortified Professor; the *first* in himself, the *other* in Respect of others.

(1.) IN himself. Let him pretend what he will, he hath slight Thoughts of Sin; at least of Sins of daily Infirmary. The Root of an unmortified Course, is the Digestion of Sin without Bitterness in the Heart. When a Man hath confirmed his Imagination, to such an Apprehension of Grace and Mercy, as to be able without Bitterness, to swallow and digest daily Sins, that Man is at the very Brink of turning the Grace of GOD into Lasciviousness, and being hardened by the Deceitfulness of Sin. Neither is there a greater Evidence of a false and rotten Heart in the World, than to drive such a Trade. To use the Blood of *Christ*, which is given to cleanse us, 1 *Joh.* i. 7. *Tit.* ii. 14. The Exaltation of *Christ*, which is to give us Repentance, *Acts* v. 31. The Doctrine of Grace, which teaches us to deny all Ungodliness, *Tit.* ii. 11, 12. To countenance Sin is a Rebellion, that in the Issue will break the Bones.

(2.) To others. It hardens them, by begetting in them a Persuasion, that they are in as good Condition as the Best. Whatever they see in them, is so stained for want of this Mortification, that it is of no value with them; they have a Zeal for Religion, but it is accompanied with want of Forbearance, and universal Righteousness. They deny Prodigality,

digality, but with Worldliness they separate from the World, but live to themselves, taking no care to exercise loving Kindness in the Earth; or they talk spiritually, and live vainly; mention Communion with GOD, and are conformed to the World, boasting of Forgiveness of Sin, and never forgiving others; and with such Considerations do poor Creatures harden their Hearts in their Unregeneracy.

THE great sovereign Cause of Mortification, is the Spirit; that is, the Holy Ghost.

HE only is sufficient for this Work; all Ways and Means without Him are as a Thing of nought; and He is the great Efficient of it, He works in us as He pleases.

(1.) He is promised of GOD, to do this Work; the taking away of the stony Heart, that is, the stubborn, proud, rebellious, unbelieving Heart, is in general the Work of Mortification that we treat of. Now this is promised to be done by the Spirit, *Ezek. xi. 19. Chap. xxxvi. 26. I will give my Spirit, and take away the stony Heart*; and by the Spirit of GOD is this Work wrought, when all Means fail.

(2.) WE have all our Mortification from the Gift of *Christ*, and all the Gifts of *Christ* are communicated to us by the Spirit. *Without Christ we can do nothing, Joh. xv. 5.* Having received the Promise of the Holy Ghost, He sends him Abroad for that End, *Act. ii. 33.*

How doth the Spirit mortify Sin?

I ANSWER, in general three Ways.

[1.] By

[1.] By causing our Hearts to abound in Grace, and the Fruits that are contrary to the Flesh, and the Fruits thereof. So the Apostle opposes the Fruits of the Flesh, and of the Spirit: *They that are Christ's, have crucified the Flesh with the Affections and Lusts:* But how? Why, v. 25. *By living in the Spirit, and walking after the Spirit:* That is, by the Abounding of these Graces of the Spirit in us, and walking according to them.

[2.] By a real physical Efficiency on the Root of Sin, for the weakening, destroying, and taking it away. Hence He is called a *Spirit of Judgment and Burning*, Isa. iv. 4. really consuming and destroying our Lusts. He takes away the stony Heart by an almighty Efficiency; He is the Fire which burns up the very Root of Lust.

[3.] HE brings the Cross of *Christ* into the Heart of a Sinner by Faith, and gives us Communion with *Christ* in his Death, and Fellowship in his Sufferings; whereof more afterwards.

If this be the Work of the Spirit alone, how is it that we are exhorted to it? Seeing the Spirit of God only can do it, let the Work be left wholly to Him.

[1.] IT is no otherwise the Work of the Spirit, but as all Graces and good Works, which are in us, are his; He works in us *to will and to do of his good Pleasure*, Phil. ii. 13. He works all our Works in us, Isa. xxvi. 12. *the Work of Faith with Power*, 2 Thess. i. 11. He causes us to pray, Rom. viii. 26. and yet we are exhorted to all these.

[2.] HE doth not so work our Mortification in us, as not to keep it still an Act of our Obedience.
The

The Holy Ghost works in us, as we are fit to be wrought upon; that is, so as to preserve our own Liberty, and free Obedience. He works upon our Understandings, Wills, Consciences, and Affections, agreeably to their own Natures; He works in us, and with us, not against us, or without us; so that his Assistance is an Encouragement, as to the facilitating of the Work, and no Occasion of Neglect, as to the Work itself.

Now the Life, Vigour, and Comfort of our spiritual Life depends much on our Mortification of Sin.

STRENGTH, and Comfort, and Power, and Peace, in our walking with God, are the Things of our Desires. Were any of us asked seriously, what it is that troubles us? We must refer it to one of these Heads; either we want Strength, or Power, Vigour, and Life, in our Obedience, in our Walking with God; or we want Peace, Comfort, and Consolation therein.

BUT all these much depend on a constant Course of Mortification, as a Thing that hath an effectual Influence thereinto. For

(1.) THIS alone keeps Sin from depriving us of the one and the other.

EVERY unmortified Sin will certainly do two Things. [1.] it will weaken the Soul, and deprive it of its Vigour. [2.] It will darken the Soul and deprive it of its Comfort.

[1.] IT weakens the Soul and deprives it of its Strength. When *David* had for a while harboured an unmortified Lust in his Heart, it broke all his Bones, and left him no spiritual Strength; hence he

he complained that he was Sick, Weak, Wounded, Faint; there is, saith he, *no Soundness* in me, *Psal.* xxxviii. 3. *I am feeble and sore broken*, v. 8. yea, I cannot *so much as look up*, *Psal.* xl. 12. An unmortified Lust will drink up the Spirit, and all the Vigour of the Soul.

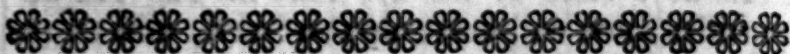
[2.] As Sin weakens, so it darkens the Soul. It is a Cloud, a thick Cloud, that spreads itself over the Face of the Soul, and intercepts all the Beams of God's Love and Favour. And if the Soul begins to gather up Thoughts of Consolation, Sin quickly scatters them.

Now in this Regard doth the Vigour and Power of our spiritual Life depend on our Mortification. It is the only Means of the Removal of that, which will allow us neither the one nor the other.

(2.) MORTIFICATION prunes all the Graces of God, and makes room for them in our Hearts to grow. The Vigour of our spiritual Lives consists in the Vigour and Flourishing of the Plants of Grace in our Hearts. Now as you may see in a Garden, let there be a precious Herb planted, and let the Ground be untilled and Weeds grow about it, perhaps it will live still, but be a poor withered Thing; when let another of the same Kind be set in Ground, naturally as barren as the other; but let it be well weeded, and every Thing that is hurtful removed from it, it flourishes and thrives: So it is with the Graces of the Spirit that are planted in our Hearts.

(3.) As to our Peace; as there is nothing that hath any Evidence of Sincerity without it, so I know nothing that hath such an Evidence of Sincerity in it; which is no small Foundation of our Peace.

Peace. Mortification is the Soul's vigorous Opposition to self; wherein Sincerity is most evident.



C H A P. III.

What it is to mortify any SIN.

THESE Things being premised, I come to my principal Intention, of handling some Questions that present themselves in this Business of Mortification.

THE first, whereunto all are reduced, may be considered as lying under the ensuing Proposal.

SUPPOSE a Man be a true Believer, and yet finds in himself a powerful indwelling Sin, consuming his Heart with Trouble, perplexing his Thoughts, weakening his Soul, as to Communion with GOD, what shall he do? What Course shall he take for the Mortification of this Sin, that he may be enabled to keep up Strength and Peace in Communion with GOD?

IN answer to this important Enquiry, I shall do these Things,

I. SHEW what it is to mortify any Sin, that we be not mistaken in the Foundation.

II. GIVE general Directions for such Things, without which it will be impossible for any one to get any Sin truly mortify'd.

III. DRAW

III. DRAW out the Particulars whereby this is to be done.

1. THERE is no Man that truly sets himself to mortify any Sin, but he aims at, intends, desires its utter Destruction; that it should leave neither Root nor Fruit, in the Heart or Life. He would so kill it, that it should never move or stir any more, cry or call, seduce or tempt to Eternity. Its not being is the Thing aimed at, altho' it is not soon attained.

2. THE Mortification of Sin consists not in the Improvement of a quiet, sedate Nature. Some Men have an Advantage by their natural Constitution, that they are not exposed to such Violence of unruly Passions, as many others. Let now these Men improve their natural Temper, by Discipline, Consideration and Prudence, and they may seem to themselves and others, very mortify'd Men, when perhaps their Hearts are a standing Sink of all Abominations. Let not such try their Mortification by such Things, as their natural Temper gives no Life or Vigour to: Let them bring themselves to Self-denial, Unbelief, or some such spiritual Sin, and they will have a better View of themselves.

3. A SIN is not mortify'd, when it is only diverted. *Simon Magus*, for a Season, left his Sorceries; but his Covetousness and Ambition remained still: Therefore *St. Peter* tells him, *I perceive thou art in the Gall of Bitterness*. A Man may be sensible of a Lust, set himself against it, take Care that it shall not break forth as it hath done; but in the mean Time suffer the same corrupted Habit to vent itself some other Way. And the same is the Case of bartering of Lusts, and leaving one, that a Man may serve another. He that changes Sensuality for Pharisaism, Vanity in himself for Contempt of

of others ; let him not think that he hath mortified the Sin, that he seems to have left. He hath changed his Master, but is a Servant still.

4. OCCASIONAL Conquests of Sin do not amount to a mortifying of it.

THERE are two Occasions wherein Men who are contending with any Sin, may seem to themselves to have mortify'd it.

(1.) WHEN it hath had some sad Eruption to the Disturbance of their Peace, Terror of their Consciences, and evident Provocation of GOD. This awakens all that is in the Man, and amazes him, fills him with Abhorrency of Sin, and himself for it ; sends him to GOD, makes him cry out for Life. The whole Man, spiritual and natural, being now awaked, Sin shrinks in, appears not, but lies as dead before him.

(2.) IN a Time of some Calamity, or pressing Affliction ; the Heart is then taken up with Tho'ts of flying from the present Troubles and Dangers : This, as a convinced Person concludes, is to be done, only by Relinquishment of Sin. It is the Anger of GOD in every Affliction that galls a convinced Person. To be quit of this, Men resolve at such Times against their Sins. Sin shall never more have any Place in them ; they will never again give up themselves to the Service of it. Accordingly Sin is quiet, stirs not, seems to be mortify'd ; not indeed that it hath received any one Wound, but meerly because the Soul hath possessed its Faculties, whereby it should exert itself, with Thoughts inconsistent with the Motions thereof ; which when they are laid aside, Sin returns again to its former Life and Vigour.

WHAT

WHAT it is to mortify a Sin, is next to be considered.

THE Mortification of a Lust consists in three Things.

1. AN habitual Weakning of it. Every Lust is a depraved Disposition, continually inclining the Heart to Evil. That is the Description of him, who hath no Lust truly mortify'd, *Gen. vi. 5. Every Imagination of the Thoughts of his Heart is only evil continually.* He is always under the Power of a strong Bent and Inclination to Sin. And the Reason why a natural Man is not always, perpetually, in the Pursuit of some one Lust Night and Day, is, because he hath many to serve, every one crying to be satisfy'd; thence he is carried on with great Variety, but still in general he lies towards the Satisfaction of self.

WE will suppose then the Lust or Distemper, whose Mortification is enquired after, to be in itself a strong, deeply rooted, habitual Inclination and Bent of Will and Affections, unto some actual Sin, as to the Matter of it, though not under that formal Consideration, always stirring up Imaginations, Thoughts and Contrivances about the Object of it. Hence Men are said to have their Hearts set upon Evil. A sinful depraved Habit, as in many other Things, so in this, differs from all natural or moral Habits whatever; whereas they incline the Soul gently and suitably to itself, sinful Habits impel with Violence and Impetuosity: Whence Lusts are said to *Fight or War* against the Soul, *1 Pet. ii. 11.* to rebel, to lead captive, all Works of great Violence and Impetuosity.

Now the first Thing in Mortification is the Weakening this Habit of Sin, that it shall not with that Violence, rise up, tumultuate, entice, disquiet, as it is apt to do.

2. IN constant fighting and contending against Sin. To be able always to be laying Load on Sin, is no small Degree of Mortification. When Sin is strong and vigorous, the Soul is scarce able to make any Head against it.

It is implied in this Fighting, (1.) To know that a Man hath such an Enemy; to take Notice of it, to consider it as an Enemy, and one that is to be destroy'd by all Means possible. The Contest is vigorous and hazardous; it is about the Things of Eternity. When therefore Men have slight and transient Thoughts of their Lusts, it is no Sign they are in a Way for their Mortification.

(2.) To Labour to be acquainted with the Ways, Methods, Advantages and Occasions of its Success is the Beginning of this Warfare. So do Men deal with Enemies. They enquire out their Designs, ponder their Ends, consider how they have formerly prevailed, that they may be prevented; in this consists the greatest Skill. Take this away, and all waging of War, wherein is the greatest Improvement of human Wisdom, and Industry, would be brutish. So do they deal with Lust, who mortify it indeed; not only when it is actually vexing, enticing, and seducing, but in their Retirements they consider, this is our Enemy, this is his Way and Progress, these are his Advantages, thus hath he prevailed, and thus he will do, if not prevented.

(3.) To load it daily with all Things that are grievous, killing and destructive to it, is the Height
of

of this Contest ; such an one never thinks his Lust dead, because it is quiet, but labours still to give it new Wounds, new Blows every Day.

UNTO these Heads then do I refer the Mortification aimed at ; that is, of any one perplexing Distemper, whereby the Corruption of our Nature attempts to exert itself.

[1.] FIRST, the Weakning of its indwelling Disposition, whereby it inclines, entices, impels to Evils, Rebels, Fights against GOD, by the implanting habitual Residence, and cherishing of a Principle of Grace, that stands in direct Opposition to it, is the Foundation of it. So by the Implanting and Growth of Humility is Pride weakened, Passion by Patience, Uncleaness by Purity.

2. THE Vigour of the Spirit, in contending with the Lust, by all the Means that are appointed thereunto, constantly using the Succours provided against its Motions, is a second Thing here required.

3. SUCCESS in several Degrees attends these two. Now this, if the Distemper hath not an unconquerable Advantage from its natural Situation, may be to such an universal Conquest, as the Soul may never more sensibly feel its Opposition.





CHAP. IV.

General RULES, without which no Lust will be mortified.

THE Means whereby a Soul may proceed to the Mortification of any particular Sin, comes next under Consideration.

Now there are some general Considerations to be premised, concerning some Principles of this Work, without which no Man, be he never so much resolved for the Mortification of any Sin, can attain thereunto.

I. **UNLESS** a Man be a Believer, he can never mortify any one Sin.

MORTIFICATION is the Work of Believers, *Rom. viii. 13. If ye through the Spirit, &c. Ye Believers, to whom there is no Condemnation, ver. 1. They alone are exhorted to it. Col. iii. 5. Mortify therefore your Members that are upon the Earth. Who should mortify? You who are risen with Christ, ver. 1. Whose Life is hid with Christ in God, ver. 3. An unregenerate Man may do something like it, but the Work itself, so as it may be acceptable with God, he can never perform.*

It is true, it will be required of every Person whatever, that hears the Law or Gospel preached, that he mortify Sin: It is his Duty, but it is not his

his immediate Duty : It is his Duty to do it, but to do it in GOD's Way. If you require your Servant to pay so much Money for you in such a Place, but first to go and take it up in another ; it is his Duty to pay the Money appointed, and you will blame him if he do it not ; yet it was not his immediate Duty ; he was first to take it up, according to your Direction. So it is in this Case ; Sin is to be mortify'd, but something is to be done in the first Place to enable us thereto.

BUT you will say : What then would you have ungenerate Men, that are convinced of the Evil of Sin, do ? Shall they cease striving against Sin, live dissolutely, give their Lusts their Swing, and be as bad as the worst of Men ?

1. GOD forbid ! It is to be looked on as a great Issue of the Wisdom, Goodness, and Love of GOD, that by manifold Ways he is pleased to restrain the Sons of Men, from running into that Excess, which the Depravedness of their Nature would carry them with Violence. By what Way soever this is done, it is an Issue of the Care, Kindness, and Goodness of GOD, without which the whole Earth would be an Hell of Sin and Confusion.

2. THERE is a peculiar convincing Power in the Word, which GOD is often pleased to put forth to the Wounding of Sinners : And the Word is to be preached, tho' it hath this End, yet not with this End. Let then the Word be preached, and the Sins of Men rebuked, Lust will be restrained, though that be not the Effect aimed at.

3. LET Men know it is their Duty, but in its proper Place ; I take not Men from Mortification, but put them upon Conversion. He that shall call

a Man from mending a Hole in the Wall of his House, to quench a Fire that is consuming the whole Building, is not his Enemy. Poor Soul! It is not thy Fore-Finger, but thy Hectick Fever that thou art to apply thyself to the Consideration of. Thou settest thyself against a particular Sin, and dost not consider that thou art nothing but Sin.

LET me add this to them who are Preachers of the Word. It is their Duty to plead with Men about their Sins, to lay Loads on particular Sins, but always remember, that it be done with that which is the proper End of Law and Gospel: That is, that they make Use of the Sin they speak against, to the Discovery of the Condition wherein the Sinner is; otherwise, haply they may work Men to Formality and Hypocrisy, but little of the true End of Preaching the Gospel will be brought about. It will not avail to beat a Man off from his Drunkenness into a sober Formality. A skilful Master of the Assemblies lays his Axe at the Root, drives at the Heart. To enveigh against particular Sins of ignorant, unregenerate Persons, such as the Land is full of, is a good Work: But yet, though it may be done with great Vigour, if this be all the Effect of it, that they are set upon the most sedulous Endeavours of mortifying their Sins, all that is done, is but like beating the Enemy in an open Field, and driving him into an impregnable Castle. Get you at any Time a Sinner at the Advantage, on the Account of any one Sin whatever, have you any Thing to take hold of him by, bring it to his Condition, drive it up to the Head, and there deal with him: To break Men off particular Sins, and not to break their Hearts, is to deprive ourselves of Advantages of dealing with them.

THE second Principle is this:

WITHOUT

WITHOUT Sincerity and Diligence in universal Obedience, there is no Mortification of any one Lust to be obtained.

I SHALL a little explain this.

A MAN finds any Lust powerful, strong, he is not able to bear it, wherefore he sets himself against it, prays against it, groans under it, sighs to be delivered; but in the mean Time, perhaps in other Duties, in constant Communion with GOD, in Reading, Prayer, and Meditation, in other Ways that are not of the same Kind with the Lust where-with he is troubled, he is loose and negligent. Let not that Man think that ever he shall arrive to the Mortification of the Lust he is perplexed with. He that hath a *running Sore* upon him, arising from an ill Habit of Body; let him apply himself with what Diligence and Skill he can, to the Cure of his Sore, if he leave the general Habit of his Body under Distempers, his Labour will be in Vain. So will his Attempts be, that shall endeavour to stop a bloody Issue of Sin; and is not equally careful of his universal spiritual Constitution. For,

LET not any Man think to do his own Work, that will not do GOD's. GOD's Work consists in universal Obedience; to be freed of the present Perplexity is their own only. Hence is that of the Apostle, 2 Cor. vii. 1. *Cleanse yourselves from all Pollution of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of the LORD.* If we will do any Thing, we must do all Things. So then it is not only an intense Opposition to this, or that peculiar Lust, but an universal humble Temper of Heart, with Watchfulness over every Evil, and the Performance of every Duty, that is accepted.

2. How knowest thou but that God hath suffered the Lust, wherewith thou hast been perplexed, to get Strength in thee, and Power over thee, to chasten thee for thy other Negligences, and Luke-warmness in walking before Him; at least to awaken thee to the Consideration of thy Ways, that thou mayst make a thorough Change in thy Course of walking with Him?

THE Rage and Predominancy of a particular Lust is commonly the Fruit of a careless, negligent Course in general; and that upon a double Account.

(1.) As its natural Effect. Lust, in general, lies in the Heart of every one; and is subtle, cunning, crafty, it seduces, intices, fights, rebels. Whilst a Man keeps a diligent Watch over his Heart, its Root and Fountain; whilst above *all Keepings*, he keeps his Heart, whence are the Issues of Life and Death, Lust withers, and dies in it. But if through Negligence it makes an Eruption any particular Way, gets a Passage to the Thoughts by the Affections; the Strength of it bears that Way it hath found out, and that Way mainly it urgeth, until having got a Passage, it then vexes and disquiets, and is not easily to be restrained; that perhaps a Man may be put to wrestle all his Days in Sorrow, with that, which by a strict universal Watch might easily have been prevented.

(2.) As I said, God often suffers it to chasten our other Negligences; for as with wicked Men, he gives them up to one Sin, as the Judgment of another; so even with his own, he doth leave them sometimes, to some vexatious Distempers, either to prevent or cure some other Evil. Was it not a Correction to *Peter's* vain Confidence, that he was left

to deny his Master? Now if this be the State of Lust in its Prevalency, that GOD often suffers it so to prevail, at least to admonish us, and to humble us, perhaps to chasten and correct us for our general loose and careless Walking, is it possible that the Effect should be removed, and the Cause continued; that the particular Lust should be mortified, and the general Course be unreformed? He then that would thoroughly mortify any disquieting Lust, let him take Care to be equally diligent in all Parts of Obedience, and know that every Lust, every Omission of Duty, is burdensome to GOD, though but one, is so to him.



CHAP. V.

Particular DIRECTIONS relating to the foregoing Case proposed.

PARTICULAR Directions being the main Thing I aim at, comes next to be proposed. Now of these some are previous and preparatory, and in some of them the Work itself is contained. Of the first Sort are these ensuing.

I. CONSIDER what dangerous Symptoms thy Lust hath accompanying it. Whether it hath any deadly Mark on it, if it hath, extraordinary Remedies are to be used; an ordinary Course of Mortification will not do it.

You will say, what are these dangerous Marks and Symptoms? Some of them I shall name.

(1.) IN-

(1.) INVETERABLENESS; if it hath lain long corrupting in thy Heart, if thou hast suffered it to abide in Power and Prevalency, without attempting vigorously the killing of it, and the healing of the Wounds thou hast received by it, for some long Season, thy Distemper is dangerous. Hast thou permitted Worldliness, Ambition, Greediness of Study, to eat up other Duties; the Duties wherein thou oughtest to hold constant Communion with God, for some long Season? or Uncleaness, to defile thy Heart with vain and foolish Imaginations? Thy Lust hath a dangerous Symptom. In such a Case an ordinary Course of Humiliation will not do the Work, unless some extraordinary Course be taken, such a Person hath no Ground to expect that his latter End shall be Peace.

(2.) SECRET Pleas of the Heart for the keeping up its Peace, notwithstanding the abiding of a Lust, without a vigorous Gospel Attempt for its Mortification, is another dangerous Symptom of a deadly Distemper in the Heart. Now there be several Ways whereby this may be done, I shall name some of them. As,

[1.] WHEN upon perplexing Thoughts about Sin, instead of applying to the Destruction of it, a Man searches his Heart to see what Evidences he can find of a good Condition, notwithstanding that Sin, so that it may go well with him.

FOR a Man to gather up his Experiences of God, is an excellent Thing; but now to do it, for this End, to satisfy Conscience, which calls for another Purpose, is a desperate Device of an Heart in Love with Sin. When God shall rebuke him for the sinful Distemper of his Heart, if he, instead of applying himself to get that Sin pardoned in the Blood of

of *Christ*, and mortified by his Spirit, shall relieve himself by any such other Evidences as he hath, or thinks himself to have, and so disentangle himself from under the Yoke, that God was putting on his Neck; his Condition is very dangerous, his Wound hardly curable. Thus the *Jews* under the Gallings of their own Consciences, and the convincing Preachings of our Saviour, supported themselves with this, that they were *Abram's* Children, and on that Account accepted of God, and so countenanced themselves in all abominable Wickedness, to their utter Ruin.

[2.] By applying Grace and Mercy to an unmortified Sin, is this Deceit carried on. This is a Sign of an Heart greatly intangled with the Love of Sin. That Man's Wounds stink and are corrupt, and he will without speedy Deliverance be at the Door of Death.

(3.) FREQUENCY of Success in Sin's Seduction, is another dangerous Symptom. This is that, I mean, when the Sin gets the Consent of the Will with some Delight, though it be not outwardly perpetrated. It is all one upon the Matter, whether this be done by Choice, or by Inadvertency. For that Inadvertency itself is in a Manner chosen. When we are inadvertent and negligent, where we are bound to Watchfulness and Carefulness, that Inadvertency doth not take off from the Voluntariness of what we do thereupon; for altho' Men do not choose and resolve to be negligent and inadvertent, yet if they choose the Things that will make them so, they choose Inadvertency itself.

(4.) WHEN a Man fighteth against his Sin only with Arguments from the Issue, or the Punishment due unto it; this is a Sign, that Sin hath

taken great Possession of the Will, and that in the Heart there is a *Superfluity of Naughtiness*. Such a Man as opposes nothing to the Seduction of Sin in his Heart, but Fear of Shame among Men, or Hell from GOD, is sufficiently resolved to do the Sin, if there were no Punishment attending it. Try thyself by this also, when thou art by Sin driven to make a Stand, so that thou must either serve it, or make Head against it to suppress it; what dost thou say to thy Soul? Is this all, Hell will be the End of this Course, Vengeance will meet with me, and find me out? It is Time for thee to look about thee, Evil lies at the Door.

(5.) WHEN it is probable that there is, or may be somewhat of judicial Hardness, or at least of chastening Punishment in thy Lust. This is another dangerous Symptom. But how shall a Man know whether there be any Thing of GOD's chastening Hand, in his being left to the Disquietness of his Distemper? Examine thy Heart and Ways, what was the Condition of thy Soul before thou fellest into the Intanglements of that Sin? Hast thou been negligent in Duties? Hast thou lived inordinately to thyself? Is there the Guilt of any great Sin lying upon thee unrepented of? A new Sin may be permitted, as well as a new Affliction sent to bring an old Sin to Remembrance. If thou findest this to have been thy State, awake, call upon GOD, thou art fast asleep in a Storm of Anger round about thee.

(6.) WHEN thy Lust hath already withstood particular Dealings from GOD against it. This is a sad Condition. GOD often in his providential Dispensations meets with a Man, and speaks particularly to the Evil of the Heart, as He did to Joseph's Brethren in their selling him into Egypt. This

This makes the Man reflect on his Sin, and judge himself in particular for it. GOD makes it to be the Voice of the Danger, Affliction, Trouble, Sickness that he is under. Sometimes in Reading the Word, GOD makes a Man stay on Something that cuts him to the Heart, and shakes him as to his present Condition. More frequently in hearing the Word preached, his great Ordinance for Conviction, Conversion, and Edification, doth He meet with Men. GOD often hews Men by the Sword of his Word in that Ordinance; strikes directly on their Bosom Lust; startles the Sinner, makes him engage in the Mortification of the Evil of his Heart. Now if his Lust have taken such Hold on Him, as to enforce him to break these Bonds of the LORD, and to cast these Cords from him; if it overcomes these Convictions, and gets again into its old Posture; if it can cure the Wounds it so receives, that Soul is in a sad Condition. These and many other Evidences are there of a Lust that is dangerous, if not mortal. As our Saviour said of the Evil Spirit, *This Kind, goes not out but by Fasting and Prayer*, so say I, of Lusts of this Kind; an ordinary Course of Mortification will not do it, extraordinary Ways must be fixed on.

THIS is the first particular Direction; consider, Whether the Sin you are contending with, hath any of these dangerous Symptoms. The second Direction is this, get a clear and abiding Sense of the Guilt, Danger, and Evil of that Sin.

1. OF the Guilt of it. It is one of the Deceits of a prevailing Lust, to extenuate its own Guilt. Is it not a little One? Though this be bad, yet it is not so bad, as such and such an Evil. Innumerable Ways there are, whereby Sin diverts the Mind from a due Apprehension of its Guilt.

Its noisome Exhalations darken the Mind, that it cannot make a right Judgment of Things.

LET this then be the first Care of him that would mortify Sin, to fix a right Judgment of its Guilt in his Mind. To which End consider, though the Power of Sin be weaken'd by inherent Grace, in them that have it, that Sin shall not have Dominion over them, yet the Guilt of Sin that doth yet abide, is aggravated and heighten'd by it. I shall not insist on the special Aggravations of the Sins of such Persons; how they sin against more Love, Mercy, Grace, Assistance, Means, and Deliverances, than others. But let this Consideration abide in thy Mind: There is inconceivably more Guilt in the Evil of thy Heart, that doth remain, than if thou hadst no Grace at all.

2. CONSIDER the Danger.

(1.) OF being harden'd by its Deceitfulness; this the Apostle sorely charges on the *Hebrews*, Chap. iii. 12, 13. *Take Heed, Brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil Heart of Unbelief, in departing from the Living GOD, but exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day, lest any of you be harden'd through the Deceitfulness of Sin.* Take Heed, saith he, use all Means, consider your Temptations, watch diligently, there is a Treachery, a Deceit in Sin, that tends to the hardening of your Hearts from the Fear of GOD. The Hardening here mentioned is to the Utmost; utter Obduration, Sin tends to it, and every Lust will make at least some Progress towards it. Thou that wast tender, and didst use to melt under the Word, under Afflictions, wilt grow as some have spoken, Sermon Proof, and Sicknes Proof; thou that

that didst tremble at the Presence of GOD, and Appearance before Him, when thou hadst more Assurance of his Love than now thou hast, shalt have a Stoutness upon thy Spirit, not to be moved by these Things. Thy Soul and thy Sin shall be spoken of, and spoken to, and thou shalt not be at all concerned; but shalt be able to pass over Duties, Praying, Hearing, Reading, and thy Heart not in the least affected. Sin will grow a light Thing to thee; thou wilt pass it by as a Thing of Nought; this it will grow to, and what will be the End of such a Condition?

(3.) Loss of Peace and Strength all a Man's Days. To have Peace with GOD, to have Strength to walk before GOD, is the Sum of the great Promises of the Covenant of Grace. In these Things is the Life of our Souls. Without them in some comfortable Measure, to live is to die. What Good will our Lives do us, if we see not the Face of GOD in Peace? If we have not some Strength to walk with Him? Now both these will an unmortified Lust certainly deprive Men of. If ever then thou hast enjoyed Peace with GOD, if ever his Terrors have made thee afraid, if ever thou hast had Strength to walk with Him, or ever hast mourn'd in thy Prayer, think of this Danger that hangs over thy Head. It is perhaps but a little While and thou shalt see the Face of GOD in Peace no more. Perhaps by To-morrow thou shalt not be able to pray, read, hear, or perform any Duties with the least Life or Vigour; and possibly thou mayest never see a quiet Hour whilst thou livest; that thou mayest carry about thee broken Bones full of Pain and Terror all the Days of thy Life; yea, perhaps GOD will shoot his Arrows at thee, and fill thee with Anguish and Disquietness, with Fears and Perplexities, make

thee a Terror and an Astonishment to thyself and others; shew thee Hell and Wrath every Moment; frighten and scare thee with sad Apprehensions of his Hatred, so that thy Sore shall run in the Night Season, and thy Soul shall refuse Comfort; so that thou shalt wish Death rather than Life; yea, thy Soul may choose Strangling. Consider this a little, though GOD should not utterly destroy thee, yet He might cast thee into this Condition, wherein thou shalt have quick and living Apprehensions of thy Destruction. Leave not this Consideration, until thou hast made thy Soul to tremble within thee.

(4.) THERE is the Danger of eternal Destruction.

FOR the due Management of this Consideration, observe,

[1.] THAT there is such a Connexion between a Continuance in Sin, and eternal Destruction, that though GOD does deliver some from a Continuance in Sin, that they may not be destroyed, yet He will deliver none from Destruction, that continue in Sin. So that whilst any one lies under an abiding Power of Sin, the Threats of Destruction and everlasting Separation from GOD are to be held out to him, so *Heb. iii. 12.* to which add, *Heb. x. 38.* This is the Rule of GOD's Proceeding. If any Man depart from Him, *draw back through Unbelief, GOD's Soul hath no Pleasure in Him*, that is, his Indignation shall pursue him to Destruction; so evidently, *Gal. vi. 8.*

[2.] THAT he who is so entangled under the Power of any Corruption, can have at that present no clear Evidence of his Interest in the Covenant, by the Efficacy whereof he may be delivered

livered from Fear of Destruction. So that Destruction from the LORD may justly be a Terror to him; and he may, he ought to look upon it, as that which will be the End of his Ways. *There is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, Rom. viii. 1.* True! But who shall have the Comfort of this Assertion? Who may assume it to himself? *They that walk after the Spirit, and not after the Flesh.* But you will say, Is not this to persuade Men to Unbelief? I answer, No; there is a two-fold Judgment that a Man may make of himself, of his Person, and of his Ways. It is the Judgment of his Ways, not his Person, that I speak of; let a Man get the best Evidence for his Person that he can, yet to judge that an evil Way will end in Destruction, is his Duty, not to do it is Atheism. I do not say, that in such a Condition a Man ought to throw away the Evidences of his personal Interest in *Christ*; but I say, he cannot keep them. There is a two-fold Condemnation of a Man's Self: *First*, In Respect of Desert, when the Soul concludes, that it deserves to be cast out of the Presence of God; and this is so far from being the Business of Unbelief, that it is an Effect of Faith. *Secondly*, With Respect to the Issue and Event; when the Soul concludes it shall be damn'd. I do not say this is the Duty of any one, nor do I call them to it; but this I say, that the End of the Way wherein a Man is, ought by him to be concluded to be Death, that he may be provoked to fly from it. And this is another Consideration that ought to dwell upon such a Soul, if it desire to be freed from the Intanglement of its Lusts.

3. CONSIDER the Evils of it; I mean its present Evils. Danger respects what is to come;

Evil what is present, some of the many Evils that attend an unmortified Lust may be mentioned.

(1.) IT grieves the blessed Spirit, which is given to Believers to dwell in them, and abide with them. So the Apostle, *Ephes. iv. 25, 26, 27, 28, 29.* dehorting them from many Lusts and Sins, gives this as the great Motive of it, *ver. 30. Grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby you are sealed to the Day of Redemption.* Grieve not that Spirit of GOD, whereby you receive so many and so great Benefits, of which he instances in one signal and comprehensive one; *sealing to the Day of Redemption.* He is grieved by it, as a tender and loving Friend is griev'd at the Unkindness of his Friend, of whom he hath well deserved; so is it with this tender and loving Spirit, who hath chosen our Hearts for a Habitation to dwell in. He is grieved by our harbouring his Enemies, and those whom He is to destroy. He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve us, *Lam. iii. 33.* And shall we daily grieve Him? Thus is He said sometimes to be *vexed*, sometimes *grieved at his Heart*, to express the greatest Sense of our Provocation. Now if the Soul be not utterly harden'd by the Deceitfulness of Sin, this Consideration will certainly affect it. Consider who and what thou art, who the Spirit is that is griev'd, what He hath done for thee, what he comes to thy Soul about, what He hath already done in thee, and be ashamed.

(2.) THE LORD *Jesus* is wounded afresh by it; his Love is foiled, his Adversary gratified. As a total Relinquishment of Him, by the Deceitfulness of Sin, is the Crucifying Him afresh, and *the Putting Him to open Shame*, so every harbouring

ing of Sin that He came to destroy, wounds and grieves Him.

(3.) It will take away a Man's Usefulness in his Generation. His Works, his Endeavours, his Labours seldom receive Blessing from God. If he be a Preacher, God commonly blows upon his Ministry, that he shall labour in the Fire, and not be honour'd with any Success; and the like may be spoken of other Conditions.

THIS then is my second Direction; keep alive upon thy Heart, and be much in the Meditation of these Things. Cause thy Heart to dwell and abide upon them. Engage thy Thoughts in these Considerations, let them not go off, until they begin to have a powerful Influence upon thy Soul; until they make it tremble.



CHAP. VI.

Farther DIRECTIONS proposed.

THIS is my *third* Direction. Load thy Conscience with the Guilt of it. Not only consider that it hath a Guilt, but load thy Conscience with the Guilt of its actual Eruptions and Disturbances.

FOR the right Improvement of this Rule, I shall give some particular Directions:

I. TAKE GOD's Method in it; begin with Generals, and so descend to Particulars.

(I.) CHARGE

(1.) **CHARGE** thy Conscience with that Guilt which appears in it, from the Holiness of the Law. Bring the holy Law of **GOD** into thy Conscience, lay thy Corruption to it; pray that thou mayst be affected with it. Consider the Holiness, Spirituality, Absoluteness of the Law; and see how thou canst stand before it. Be much, I say, in affecting thy Conscience with the Terror of the **LORD** in the Law, and how Righteous it is, that every one of thy Transgressions should receive a Recompence of Reward. Perhaps thy Conscience will invent Shifts and Evasions to keep off the Power of this Consideration, as that the condemning Power of the Law doth not belong to thee, thou art set free from it, and the like; and so though thou be not conformable to it, yet thou needest not to be so much troubled at it. But,

[1.] **TELL** thy Conscience, that it cannot manage any Evidence to the Purpose, that thou art free from the condemning Power of Sin, whilst thy unmortified Lust lies in thy Heart; so that perhaps the Law may make good its Plea against thee, for a full Dominion, and then thou art lost. Wherefore it is best to ponder to the utmost, what it hath to say.

[2.] **WHAT** ever be the Issue, yet the Law hath Commission from **GOD** to seize upon Transgressors, where ever it find them, and so bring them before his Throne, where they are to plead for themselves. This is thy present Case, the Law hath found thee out; and before **GOD** it will bring thee; if thou canst plead a Pardon, well and good, if not the Law will do its Work.

[3.] **HOWEVER**, this is the proper Work of the Law, to discover Sin in the Guilt of it, to awake

wake and humble the Soul for it, to be a Glass to represent Sin in its Colours; and if thou deniest to deal with it on this Account, it is not through Faith, but through the Hardness of thy Heart, and the Deceitfulness of Sin.

By such Ways, I say, persuade thy Conscience to hearken diligently to what the Law speaks in the Name of the LORD unto thee, about thy Lust and Corruption. O! if thy Ears be open, it will speak with a Voice that shall make thee tremble, that shall cast thee to the Ground, and fill thee with Astonishment. If ever thou wilt mortify thy Corruptions, thou must tie up thy Conscience to the Law, shut it from all Shifts and Exceptions, until it owns its Guilt with a clear and thorough Apprehension.

(2.) BRING thy Lust to the Gospel; not for Relief, but for farther Conviction of its Guilt; look on Him whom thou hast pierced, and be in Bitterness. Say to thy Soul, what have I done, what Love, what Mercy, what Blood, what Grace have I despised and trampled on? Is this the Return I make to the Father for his Love, to the Son for his Blood, to the Holy Ghost for his Grace? Do I thus requite the LORD! Have I defiled the Heart that *Christ* died to wash, that the blessed Spirit hath chosen to dwell in? And can I keep myself out of the Dust? What can I say to the LORD *Jesus Christ*? How shall I hold up my Head with any Boldness before Him? Do I account Communion with Him of so little Value, that for this vile Lust's Sake, I have scarce left Him any Room in my Heart? How shall I escape, if I neglect so great Salvation? In the mean Time, what shall I say to the LORD? Love, Mercy, Goodness, Peace, Joy, Consolation, I have despised them all, and esteem-
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ed them as a Thing of nought, that I might harbour a Lust in my Heart. Entertain thy Conscience daily with this Treaty. See if it can stand before this Aggravation of its Guilt. If this make it not sink in some Measure and melt, I fear thy Case is Dangerous.

2. DESCEND to Particulars. As under the general Head of the Gospel, all the Benefits of it are to be considered, as Redemption, Justification, and the like; so in Particular, consider the Love toward thine own Soul, for the Aggravation of the Guilt of thy Corruption. As,

(1.) CONSIDER the infinite Patience and Forbearance of GOD towards thee in Particular. Consider what Advantages he might have taken against thee, to have made thee a Reproach in this World, and an Object of Wrath for ever. How thou hast dealt treacherously and falsely with Him from Time to Time, flattered Him with thy Lips, but broken all Promises and Engagements, and that by the Means of that Sin thou art now in Pursuit of; and yet He hath spared thee from Time to Time, although thou seemest boldly to have put it to the Trial how long He could hold out. And wilt thou yet sin against Him? Wilt thou yet weary Him and make Him to serve with thy Corruptions?

(2.) How often hast thou been at the Door of being hardened by the Deceitfulness of Sin; and by the infinite rich Grace of GOD hast been recovered to Communion with Him again?

(3.) ALL GOD's gracious Dealings with thee in providential Dispensations, Deliverances, Afflictions, Mercies, Enjoyments, ought here to take Place. By these, and the like Means, load thy Conscience,

Conscience, and leave it not, until it be thoroughly affected with the Guilt of thy Corruption, until it is sensible of its Wound, and lie in the Dust before the LORD; unless this be done to the Purpose, all other Endeavours are to no Purpose. Whilst the Conscience hath any Means to alleviate the Guilt of Sin, the Soul will never vigorously attempt its Mortification.

(4.) BEING thus affected with thy Sin, in the next Place, get a constant Longing, Breathing after Deliverance from the Power of it. Suffer not thy Heart one Moment to be contented with thy present Condition. Assure thyself, unless thou longest for Deliverance, thou shalt not have it. Get thy Heart then into a panting and breathing Frame, long, sigh, cry out; you know the Example of *David*, I shall not need to insist on it.

THE fifth *Direction*, is, Consider whether the Distemper with which thou art perplexed, be not rooted in thy Nature, and cherished, fomented, and heightened from thy Constitution. A Proneness to some Sins may doubtless lie in the natural Temper and Disposition of Men. In this Case consider,

1. THIS is not in the least an Extenuation of the Guilt of thy Sin. Some with an open Profaneness will ascribe gross Enormities to their Temper and Disposition. And whether others may not relieve themselves from the pressing Guilt of their Distempers by the same Consideration, I know not. It is from the Fall, from the original Depravation of our Natures, that any Sin abides in our natural Temper. *David* reckons his being shapen in Iniquity, and Conception in Sin, as an Aggravation of his following Sin, not a Lessening or Extenuation of it. That thou art peculiarly inclined unto
any

any Sin, is but a peculiar breaking out of original Lust in thy Nature, which should peculiarly abase and humble thee.

2. THAT all thou hast to fix upon on this Account, in reference to thy walking with GOD, is that so great an Advantage is given to Sin, as also to Satan, by this thy Temper, that without extraordinary Watchfulness, Care and Diligence, they will assuredly prevail against thy Soul. Thousands have been on this Account hurried headlong to Hell.

3. FOR the Mortification of any Distemper, so rooted in Nature, unto all other Means, there is one Expedient peculiarly suited. This is that of the Apostle, 1 Cor. ix. 27. *I keep under my Body, and bring it into Subjection.* The bringing of the very Body into Subjection, is an Ordinance of GOD, tending to the Mortification of Sin. This gives Check to the natural Root of the Distemper, and withers it by taking away its Fatness of Soil. The bringing of the Body into Subjection in the Case insisted on, by cutting short the natural Appetite, by Fasting, Watching, and the like, is doubtless acceptable to GOD, so it be done with the ensuing Limitations.

(1.) THAT the outward Weakening of the Body be not looked upon as a Thing good in itself, or that any Mortification doth consist therein, which were again to bring us under carnal Ordinances, but only as a Means for the End proposed; the weakening of any Distemper in its natural Root. A Man may have Leanness of Body and Soul together.

(2.) THAT the Means whereby this is done, namely, by Fasting and Watching, and the like,
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be not looked on as Things that in themselves can produce true Mortification of any Sin; for if they would, Sin might be mortified without any Help of the Spirit. They are to be looked on only as Ways whereby the Spirit may, and sometimes doth, put forth Strength for the Accomplishing of his own Work, especially in the Case mentioned. Want of a right Understanding, and due Improvement of these and the like Considerations, hath raised a Mortification among the Papists, that may be better applied to Horses, and other Beasts of the Field, than to Believers.

THIS is the Sum of what hath been spoken: When the Distemper complained of seems to be rooted in the Natural Temper, in applying our Souls to a Participation of the Blood and Spirit of *Christ*, an Endeavour is to be used to give Check in the Way of GOD to the natural Root of that Distemper.

THE sixth Direction is, Consider what Occasions, what Advantages thy Distemper hath taken to exert itself, and watch against them all.

THIS is one Part of that Duty which our blessed Saviour recommends to his Disciples under the Name of *Watching*, Mark xiii. 37. *I say unto you all, watch; which in Luke xxi. 34. is, Take heed that your Hearts be not over-charged: Watch against all Eruptions of thy Corruptions, consider what Ways, what Companies, what Opportunities, what Studies, what Businesses, what Conditions, have at any Time given, or do usually give Advantages to thy Distempers, and set thyself heedfully against them all. Men will do this with Respect to their bodily Infirmities. The Seasons, the Diet, the Air that have proved offensive, shall be avoided. Are the Things of the Soul of less Importance?*

Know that he that dares to dally with Occasions of Sin, will dare to Sin. He that will venture upon Temptations unto Wickedness, will venture upon Wickedness.

THE seventh Direction is, Rise mightily against the first Actings of thy Distemper, its first Conceptions; suffer it not to get the least Ground. Do not say, thus far it shall go, and no farther. If it have Allowance for one Step, it will take another. It is impossible to fix Bounds to Sin. It is like Water in a Channel; if it once break out, it will have its Course. Dost thou find thy Corruption begin to entangle thy Thoughts? Rise up with all thy Strength against it, with no less Imagination, than if it had fully accomplished what it aims at: Consider what an unclean Thought would have; it would have thee roll thyself in Folly and Filth. Ask Envy what it would have; Murder and Destruction is at the End of it. Set thyself against it with no less Vigour, than if it had utterly debased thee to Wickedness. Without this Course thou wilt not prevail.

EIGHTHLY, exercise thyself to such Meditations as may fill thee at all Times with Self-abasement and Thoughts of thine own Vileness: As,

I. BE much in Thoughtfulness of the Excellence of the Majesty of GOD, and thine infinite inconceivable Distance from Him; many Thoughts of it cannot but fill thee with a Sense of thine own Vileness, which strikes deep at the Root of any indwelling Sin. When *Job* comes to a clear Discovery of the Greatness and the Excellency of GOD, he is filled with Self-abhorrence, and is pressed to Humiliation, *Job* xlii. 5, 6. Think greatly of the Greatness of GOD.

2. THINK

2. THINK much of thine Unacquaintedness with Him. Though thou knowest enough to keep thee low and humble, yet how little a Portion is it that thou knowest of Him? The Contemplation hereof cast that wise Man into that Apprehension of himself, which he expresses, *Prov. xxx. 2, 3, 4.* Surely I am more brutish than any Man, and have not the Understanding of a Man. I neither learned Wisdom, nor have the Knowledge of the Holy. Who hath ascended up into Heaven or descended? Who hath gathered the Wind in his Fists? Who hath bound the Waters in a Garment? Who hath established the Ends of the Earth? What is his Name, and what is his Son's Name, if thou canst, tell? Labour with this also to take down the Pride of thy Heart. What dost thou know of GOD? How little a Portion is it? How Immense is He in his Nature? Canst thou look without Terrour into the Abyss of Eternity? Thou canst not bear the Rays of his glorious Being.

BECAUSE I look on this Consideration of great Use in our Walking with GOD, so far as it may have a Consistency with that filial Boldness which is given us in *Jesus Christ*, I shall farther insist upon it, to give an abiding Impression of it to the Souls of them who desire to walk humbly with GOD.

CONSIDER then, I say, to keep thy Heart continual awe of the Majesty of GOD, that Persons of the most high and eminent Attainment, of the nearest and most familiar Communion with GOD, do yet in this Life know but a very little of Him, and his Glory. GOD reveals his Name to *Moses*, the most glorious Attributes that He hath manifested in the Covenant of Grace, *Exod. xxxiv. 5, 6.* yet all are but the back Parts of GOD. All that he knows by it, is but little, compared to the Perfection of his

Glory. Hence it is with peculiar Reference to *Moses*, that it is said *No Man hath seen GOD at any Time*. Of Him in Comparison with *Christ* doth he speak; and of Him it is here said, *No Man*, no not *Moses*, the most Eminent among them, *hath seen GOD at any Time*. We speak much of GOD, can talk of Him, his Ways, his Works, his Counsels all the Day long; the Truth is, we know very little of Him; our Thoughts, our Meditations, our Expressions of Him are low, many of them unworthy of his Glory, none of them reaching his Perfections.

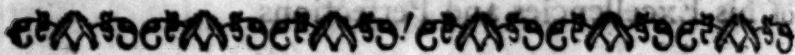
YOU will say, that *Moses* was under the Law, when GOD wrapped up Himself in Darkness, and his Mind in Types and Clouds and dark Institutions. Under the glorious Shining of the Gospel, which hath brought Light and Immortality to Light, GOD being revealed from his own Bosom, we now know Him much more clearly; we see his Face now, and not his back Parts only.

1. I ACKNOWLEDGE a vast, and almost un-conceivable Difference between the Acquaintance we now have with GOD, after his speaking to us by his own Son, and that which the Generality of the Saints had under the Law; for although their Eyes were as good, sharp, and clear as ours, their Faith, and spiritual Understanding, not behind ours, the Object as glorious unto them, as unto us, yet our Day is more clear than theirs was; the Clouds are blown away and scattered, the Shadows of the Night are fled away, the Sun is risen, and the Means of Sight is made more eminent and clear than formerly. Yet,

2. THAT peculiar Sight which *Moses* had of GOD, *Exod. xxxiv.* was a Gospel-sight, a Sight of GOD,

as Gracious, &c. and yet, it's called but his Back-parts, that is but low and mean, in Comparifon of his Excellencies and Perfections.

3. THE Apostle exalting to the utmoſt this Glory of Light, above that of the Law, manifeſting that now the Veil cauſing Darkneſs, is taken away; ſo that with open or uncovered Face we behold the Glory of the LORD, tells us how; *as in a Glaſs*, how in that? Clearly, perfectly? Alas no. He tells you how that is, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. *We ſee through a Glaſs darkly*; it is not a Telescope that helps us to ſee Things afar off, concerning which the Apoſtle ſpeaks; and yet what poor Helps are they? How ſhort do we come of the Truth of Things, notwithstanding their Aſſiſtance? It is a Looking-glaſs whereunto he alludes (where are only obſcure Images of Things, and not the Things themſelves) and a Sight therein that he compares our Knowledge to. He tells you alſo that all that we ſee, *by or through this Glaſs*, is *in a Riddle*, in Darkneſs and Obſcurity. And ſpeaking of himſelf, he tells us, that he ſaw but *in part*; he ſaw but the Back-parts of heavenly Things, and compares all the Knowledge he had attained of GOD, to that he had of Things when he was a Child: We know what weak, feeble, uncertain Notions Children have of Things of any abſtruſe Conſideration: How when they grow up with any Improvement, thoſe Conceptions vaniſh, and they are aſhamed of them. Notwithstanding all our Confidence of high Attainments, all our Notions of GOD are but Childiſh in Reſpect of his infinite Perfections. We Liſp and Babble, and ſay we know not what, for the moſt Part, in our moſt accurate Conceptions of GOD.



C H A P. VII.

The ninth DIRECTION.

NINTHLY, In case GOD disquiet the Heart about the Guilt of its Distempers, take heed thou speakest not Peace to thyself before GOD speaks it. This is our next Direction; without the Observation whereof, the Heart will be exceedingly exposed to the Deceitfulness of Sin.

THIS is a Business of great Importance. It is a sad Thing for a Man to deceive his own Soul herein. All the Warnings GOD gives us in Tenderness to our Souls, to try and examine ourselves, tend to the preventing this great Evil of speaking Peace groundlessly to ourselves, which is to bless ourselves in an Opposition to GOD. It is not my Business to insist upon the Danger of it, but to help Believers to prevent it.

To manage this Direction aright, observe,

1. THAT as it is the great Prerogative of GOD, to give Grace to whom He pleases; so He reserves this Privilege to Himself, to speak Peace to whom He pleaseth.

2. As GOD creates it for whom He pleaseth, so it is the Prerogative of *Christ* to speak it home to the Conscience.

TAKE

TAKE these two previous Observations, and I shall give some Rules whereby Men may know whether GOD speaks Peace to them, or whether they speak Peace to themselves only.

(1.) MEN certainly speak Peace to themselves, when their so doing is not attended with the greatest Detestation imaginable of that Sin, in Reference whereunto they speak Peace. When Men are wounded by Sin, and knowing there is no Remedy for them, but only in the Mercies of GOD, thro' the Blood of *Christ*, do therefore look to Him, and to the Promises of the Covenant in Him, and thereupon quiet their Hearts, and yet their Souls are not wrought to the greatest Detestation of the Sin, upon Account whereof they are disquieted, this is to heal themselves, and not to be healed of GOD. When GOD comes to speak Peace, it fills the Soul with Shame for all the Ways whereby it hath been alienated from Him. Let a Man make what Application he will for Healing and Peace; let him quiet his Heart in the Promises of the Covenant; yet when Peace is spoken, if it be not attended with the Detestation and Abhorrence of that Sin, which caused the Disquietment; this is no Peace of GOD's creating, but of our own purchasing. It is but a skinning over the Wound, whilst the Core lies at the Bottom, which will putrify and corrode, until it break out again.

(2.) WHEN Men measure out Peace to themselves upon the Conclusions that their rational Principles will carry them to; this is a false Peace. I shall a little explain what I mean. A Man hath got a Wound by Sin; he hath not walked uprightly as becometh the Gospel: He considers now what is to be done; Light he hath, and knows what Path he must take, and how his Soul hath been formerly healed.

healed. Considering that the Promises of GOD are the outward Means for the quieting his Heart, he goes to them, searches them out, finds out some, whose literal Expressions are directly suited to his Condition, says he to himself, GOD speaks in this Promise, here I will take myself a Plaister, as long and broad as my Wound, and so brings the Word of the Promise to his Condition, and sets him down in Peace. But this hath not been the Work of the Spirit, who alone can convince us of Sin and Righteousness. In this Case he acts meerly upon the Principle of Conviction; but the Spirit breathes not at all upon all these Waters. He doth not wait upon GOD, who perhaps yet hides his Face, and sees the poor Creature stealing Peace, and running away with it, knowing that the Time will come, when he will deal with him again, and call him to a new Reckoning; when he shall see it is in Vain to go one Step, where GOD doth not take him by the Hand.

BUT how shall we know when we go ourselves, and when the Spirit also doth accompany us?

(1.) IF any of you are out of the Way upon this Account, GOD will speedily let you know it; for besides that you have his Promise, that the *Meek He will guide in Judgment, and teach them his Way*, Psal. xxv. 9. He will not let you always err. He will, I say, not suffer your Nakedness to be covered with Fig-Leaves, but take them away and all the Peace you have in them, and will not suffer you to settle on such Lees; you shall quickly know your Wound is not healed. But,

(2.) THIS Course is commonly taken without waiting; which is that peculiar Act of Faith, which GOD calls for in such a Condition. I know GOD doth

doth sometimes come in upon the Soul instantly, wounding and healing it : But ordinarily in such a Case GOD calls for Waiting and Labouring, attending as the Eye of a Servant upon his Master. GOD will have his Children lye a while at his Door, when they have run from his House, and not instantly rush in upon Him ; unless He take them by the Hand, and pluck them in, when they are so ashamed that they dare not come to Him. Now Men that speak Peace to themselves, commonly make haste ; they will not tarry : They do not hearken what GOD speaks, but on they will go.

(3.) SUCH a Course, though it may quiet the Mind, yet it doth not sweeten the Heart, with Rest and gracious Content. *Do not my Words do Good, saith the LORD ? Mich. ii. 7.* When GOD speaks, there is not only Truth in his Words, that may answer the Convictions of our Understandings, but also they do Good, they bring that which is sweet and good, and desirable to the Affections.

(4.) WHICH is worst of all ; it amends not the Life, it heals not the Evil, it cures not the Distemper : When GOD speaks Peace, it guides and keeps the Soul that it turn not again to Folly. When we speak it ourselves, the Heart is not taken off the Evil. Nay, it is the readiest Course to bring a Soul into a Trade of Backsliding.

(3.) WE speak Peace to ourselves, when we do it slightly. This the Prophet complains of in some Teachers, *Jer. vi. 14.* And it is so with some Persons, they make the Healing of their Wounds a slight Work, a Look, a Glance to the Promises does it. The Apostle tells us, that the Word did not profit some, because, *Heb. iv. 2.* *μὴ συγκιχραμένον*, *it was not well tempered* and mingled with Faith. It

It is not a meer Look to the Word of Mercy in the Promise, but it must be mingled with Faith, until it is incorporated into the very Nature of it.

(4.) WHOSOEVER speaks Peace to himself upon one Account, and at the same Time hath another Evil lying upon his Spirit, about which he hath had no dealing with GOD, that Man cries Peace when there is none. To explain my Meaning: A Man hath neglected a Duty again and again; his Conscience is perplexed, his Soul wounded, he hath no Quiet in his Bones by Reason of his Sin; he applies himself for Healing and finds Peace. Yet in the mean Time perhaps Worldliness, or Pride, or some other Folly, wherewith the Spirit of GOD is exceedingly grieved, may lye in the Bosom of that Man, and they neither disturb him, nor he them. Let not that Man think that his Peace is from GOD. Then shall it be well with Men when they have an equal Respect to all GOD's Commandments. GOD will justify us from our Sins, but he will not justify the least Sin in us; *He is a GOD of purer Eyes, than to behold Iniquity.*

5. WHEN Men of themselves speak Peace to their Consciences, it is seldom that GOD speaks Humiliation to their Souls; GOD's Peace is Humbling Peace, melting Peace, as it was in the Case of David; never such deep Humiliation as when Nathan brought him the Tidings of his Pardon.





C H A P. VIII.

The general USE of the foregoing DIRECTIONS.

THE Considerations which I have hitherto insisted on, are rather of Things preparatory to the Work aimed at, than such as will effect it.

DIRECTIONS for the Work itself are very few; I mean that are peculiar to it. And they are these that follow:

I. SET Faith at Work on *Christ* for the killing of thy Sin. His Blood is the sovereign Remedy for sin-sick Souls. Live in this, and thou wilt die a Conqueror. Yea, thou wilt through the good Providence of God, live to see thy Lust dead at thy Feet.

BUT thou wilt say, How shall Faith fix on *Christ* for this Purpose? I say, sundry Ways.

(1.) BY Faith fill thy Soul with a due Consideration of that Provision, which is laid up in *Jesus Christ* for this Purpose, that all thy Lusts, this very Lust wherewith thou art entangled, may be mortify'd. By Faith ponder on this, that though thou art no way able by thyself, to get the Conquest over thy Distemper, though thou art even weary of contending, and art utterly ready to faint, yet that there

there is enough in *Christ*, to yield thee Relief. In thy greatest Distress, consider that Fullness of Grace, those Treasures of Strength, that are laid up in him. Consider that he is exalted and made a *Prince and Saviour to give Repentance unto Israel*, *Acts* v. 31. And if to give Repentance, to give Mortification, without which the other is not, nor can be. Let then thy Faith be exercised with such Thoughts as these: I am a poor, weak Creature; unstable as Water, I cannot excel; this Corruption is too hard for me, and is at the very Door of ruining my Soul; and what to do I know not; my Soul is become as parched Ground: I have made Promises and broken them, Vows and Engagements have been as a Thing of nought; many Persuasions have I had, that I had got the Victory, but I am deceived; so that I plainly see, without some eminent Succour, I am lost, and shall be prevailed on, to an utter Relinquishment of GOD; but yet though this be my State, yet let the Hands that hang down be lifted up, and the feeble Knees be strengthened; behold the *LORD Christ* that hath all Fullness of Grace in his Heart, all Fullness of Power in his Hand; He is able to slay all these his Enemies. There is sufficient Provision in Him for my Relief: He can take my drooping dying Soul and make me more than a *Conqueror*. If hereby thou dost not find Success to a Conquest, yet thou wilt be staid in the Chariot, that thou shalt not fly out of the Field; thou wilt be kept from lying down under thy Unbelief; or turning aside to false Remedies. The Efficacy of this Consideration will be found only in the Practice.

(2.) RAISE up thy Heart by Faith to an Expectation of Relief from *Christ*; Relief in this Case from *Christ* is like the Prophet's Vision, *Hab.* ii. 3. *It is for an appointed Time, but at the End it shall speak,*

Speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will not tarry; though it may seem long to thee, whilst thou art under thy Perplexity, yet it shall surely come in the appointed Time of the LORD Jesus. If then thou canst raise up thy Heart to a settled Expectation of Relief from Jesus Christ, if thine Eyes are towards Him, as the Eyes of a Servant to the Hand of his Master, when he expects to receive somewhat from him, thy Soul shall be satisfied, He will assuredly deliver thee; He will stay thy Lust, and thy latter End shall be Peace; only look for it, at his Hand, expect He will do it. If you will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.

THERE are two eminent Advantages which always attend this Expectation of Success from *Jesus Christ*.

(1.) IT engages him to a full and speedy Assistance; nothing doth more engage the Heart of a Man to be helpful to another, than his Expectation of Help from him, if justly raised and countenanced by him who is to give Relief. Our LORD *Jesus* hath raised our Hearts by his Kindness, Care, and Promises, to this Expectation; certainly our rising up to it, must needs be a great Engagement upon Him to assist us accordingly. This the *Psalmist* gives us as an approved Maxim, *Thou LORD never forsake them that put their Trust in Thee*. When the Heart is once won to rest in GOD, to repose himself on Him, He will assuredly satisfy it. He will never be as Water that fails, nor hath He said at any Time to the Seed of *Jacob*, *Seek ye my Face in Vain*. If *Christ* be chosen for the Foundation of our Supply He will not fail us.

(2.) It engages the Heart to attend diligently to all Means whereby *Christ* is wont to communicate Himself: And so takes in the real Assistance of all Graces and Ordinances whatever. He that expects any Thing from a Man, applies himself to the Means whereby it may be obtained. The Beggar that expects an Alms, lies at his Door, or in his Way, from whom he doth expect it. The Means wherein *Christ* communicates Himself, are, his Ordinances ordinarily: He that expects any Thing from Him, must attend upon Him therein. It is the Expectation of Faith that sets the Heart on Work. 'Tis not an idle groundless Hope that I speak of. If now there be any Vigour, Efficacy, and Power in Prayer or Sacrament to this End of mortifying Sin, a Man will assuredly be interested in it all, by this Expectation of Relief from *Christ*. On this Account I reduce all particular Actings, by Prayer, Meditation, and the like, to this Head: And so shall not farther insist on them when they are grounded on this Bottom, and spring from this Root; they are of singular Use to this Purpose.

Now on this Direction for the Mortification of a prevailing Distemper you may have a thousand *probatum est's*: Who have walked with God under this Temptation, and have not found the Use and Success of it? I dare leave the Soul under it, without adding any more. Only some Particulars relating thereunto may be mentioned.

(1.) EXERCISE Faith peculiarly upon the Death, Blood, and Cross of *Christ*, that is, on *Christ*, as crucified and slain: Mortification of Sin is peculiarly from the Death of *Christ*. It is one peculiar, yea, eminent End of the Death of *Christ*, which shall assuredly be accomplished by it. He died to destroy the Works of the Devil; whatever came upon

upon our Natures by his first Temptation, whatever receives Strength in our Persons by his daily Suggestions, *Christ* died to destroy it all. This was his Aim, (wherein He will not fail) in his giving Himself for us; that we might be freed from the Power of our Sins, and purified from all our defiling Lusts. And this, by Virtue of his Death, shall be accomplished. Hence our Washing, Purging, and Cleansing, is every where ascribed to his Blood. That being sprinkled on us, *purges our Consciences from dead Works to serve the living GOD*, Heb. ix. 14. This is what we are in Pursuit of, that our Consciences may be purged from dead Works, that they may be rooted out, destroyed, and have Place in us no more. This shall certainly be brought about by the Death of *Christ*; there will Virtue go out from thence to this Purpose. This is that the Apostle intends; *Christ* by his Death destroying the Works of the Devil, procuring the Spirit for us, hath so killed Sin, as to its Reign in Believers, that it shall not obtain its Dominion.

THEN exercise Faith on the Death of *Christ*, *First*, in Expectation of Power; *Secondly*, in Endeavours for Conformity. For the first, the Direction given in general may suffice. As to the latter, that of the Apostle may give us some Light, *Gal. iii. 1*. Let Faith look on *Christ* in the Gospel, as He is set forth dying and crucified for us. Look on Him under the Weight of our Sins, praying, bleeding, dying: Bring Him in that Condition into thy Heart by Faith; apply his Blood so shed to thy Corruptions; do this daily.

I HAVE only to add the Heads of the Work of the Spirit in Mortification, which is peculiarly ascribed to Him.

2. IN one Word : This whole Work is effected, by the Power of the Spirit, in all the Parts and Degrees of it ; as

(1.) HE alone clearly and fully convinces the Heart of the Evil and Guilt and Danger of the Corruption, Lust, or Sin to be mortified. Without this Conviction, or whilst it is faint, there will be no thorough Work made. An unbelieving Heart will suit with any Consideration, until it be overpowered, by clear and evident Convictions, now this is the proper Work of the Spirit, *He convinces of Sin*, John xvi. 8. He alone can do it. And therefore it is, that wise and knowing Men, destitute of the Spirit, do not think those Things to be Sins at all, wherein the chief Actings of Lust consist. It is the Spirit alone that doth this Work to the Purpose. And this is the first Thing that the Spirit doth in Order to the Mortification of any Lust whatever ; it convinces the Soul of the Evil of it ; cuts off all its Pleas, discovers all its Deceits, stops all its Evasions, answers its Pretences, makes the Soul own its Abomination, and lye down under the Sense of it. Unless this be done all that follows is in Vain.

(2.) THE Spirit alone reveals unto us the Fullness of *Christ* for our Relief, which is the Consideration that stays the Heart from false Ways.

(3.) The Spirit alone establishes the Heart in Expectation of Relief from *Christ* ; which is the great sovereign Means of Mortification.

(4.) THE Spirit alone brings the Cross of *Christ* into our Hearts, with its sin-killing Power ; for by the Spirit are we baptized into the Death of *Christ* :

(5.) THE

(5.) THE Spirit is the Author and Finisher of our Sanctification; gives new Supplies, in Influences of Grace for Holiness.

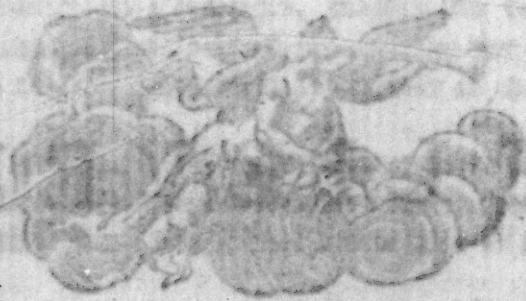
(6.) IN all the Soul's Addresses to GOD in this Condition, it hath Support from the Spirit. Whence is the Power, Life, and Vigour of Prayer; Whence its Efficacy to prevail with GOD? Is it not from the Spirit? He is the Spirit of Supplication enabling us *to pray with Groans that cannot be uttered*. This is confessed to be the great *Medium* or Way of Faith's prevailing with GOD.



(7.) The Spirit is the Author and Finisher of our Sanctification; gives new desires, in fallen hearts of Grace for Holiness.

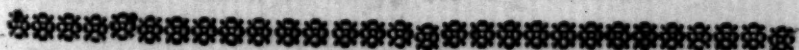
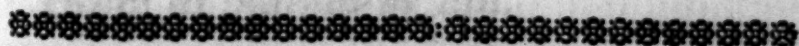
(8.) In all the Soul's Address to God in the Condition, it hath Support from the Spirit. Whence is the Power, Life, and Vigour of Prayer. Whence its Efficacy to prevail with God? Is it not from the Spirit? He is the Spirit of Supplication, enabling us to pray with Grace, and fervour of heart. This is conformed to be the great Way of Faith's prevailing with God.

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THE
*Nature, Power, Deceit and
Prevalency*

OF THE
REMAINDERS
OF
INDWELLING SIN
IN
BELIEVERS.



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Nature, Power, Deceit and
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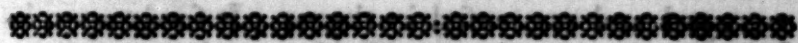


THE



THE
NATURE, POWER, DECEIT, and
PREVALENCY

Of the REMAINDERS of
INDWELLING SIN, &c.



CHAP. I.

*The Seat of Indwelling Sin. The Heart,
What meant thereby. Properties of the
Heart as possessed by Sin.*

THE Power of Indwelling Sin may appear,
First, From its Seat. *Secondly*, Its natural
Properties. And *Thirdly*, Its Operations.

FIRST, For the Seat of this, the Scripture every
where assigns to be the Heart. There Indwelling
Sin

Sin keeps its especial Residence. And so it is called by our Saviour, *The evil Treasure of the Heart*, Luke vi. 45. *An evil Man, out of the evil Treasure of his Heart, bringeth forth evil Things.* This Treasure is the prevailing Principle of moral Actions that is in Men. So in the Beginning of the Verse, our Saviour calls Grace the good Treasure of the Heart of a good Man. It is a Principle constantly and abundantly inciting, consequently bringing forth, Actions conformable unto it. And it is also called a Treasure for its Abundance. It will never be exhausted, it is not wasted by Men's Spending on it: Yea, the more lavish Men are of this Stock, the more they draw out of this Treasure, the more it grows and abounds: As Men do not spend their Grace, but increase it by its Exercise, no more do they their indwelling Sin. The more Men exercise their Grace in Duties of Obedience, the more it is strengthened and increased. And the more Men exert the Fruits of their Lust, the more is that enraged and increased in them. It feeds upon itself, swallows up its own Poison, and grows thereby. The more Men sin, the more they are inclined unto Sin. Every Sin encreaseth the Principle, and fortifieth the Habit of sinning. It is an evil Treasure that encreaseth by doing Evil. And where doth this Treasure lie? It is in the Heart, there it is laid up, there it is kept in Safety. All the Men in the World, all the Angels in Heaven, cannot dispossess a Man of this Treasure, it is so safely stored in the Heart.

THE Heart in the Scripture is variously used. Sometimes for the *Mind* and Understanding; sometimes for the *Will*; sometimes for the *Affections*; sometimes for the *Conscience*; sometimes for the *whole Soul*. Generally it denotes the whole
Soul

Soul of Man, and all the Faculties of it, not absolutely, but as they are all one Principle of moral Operations, as they all concur in our doing Good or Evil. The *Mind* as it enquireth, discerneth, and judgeth what is to be done, what refused; the *Will*, as it chuseth or refuseth; the *Affections*, as they like or dislike, that which is proposed to them. The *Conscience*, as it warns, and determines, are altogether called the *Heart*.

THIS is the Seat, the Dwelling-Place of this Sin. The Heart as it is the entire Principle of moral Operations, of doing Good or Evil, as out of it proceed Good or Evil. Here dwells our Enemy; this is the Fort, the Citadel of this Tyrant, where it maintains a Rebellion against God.

THAT we may take a little View of the Power of Sin, from this Seat of it, we may consider one or two Properties of the Heart that exceedingly contribute thereto. It is like an Enemy in War, whose Strength and Power lie not only in his Numbers, but also in the unconquerable Forts that he doth possess. And such is the Heart to this Enemy of God and our Souls, as will appear from the Properties of it.

(I.) IT is unsearchable. *Jer. xvii. 9, 10. Who can know the Heart? I the LORD search it.* The Heart of Man is perviewous to God only; hence He takes the Honour of searching the Heart as peculiar to Himself, and as fully declaring Him to be God. We know not the Hearts of one another, we know not our own Hearts as we ought. Many there are that know not their Hearts as to their general Bent and Disposition, whether it be good or bad; but no one knoweth all the secret Intrigues, the Windings and Turnings of his own Heart. Hath any one

one the perfect Measure of his own Light and Darknes? Can any one know what his Will will bring forth, upon the Proposal of that endless Variety of Objects that it is to be exercised with? Can any one traverse the various Mutability of his Affections? Do the secret Spring of acting and refusing, lie before the Eyes of any Man? Doth any one know what will be the Motions of the Mind, in such and such Conjunctions of Things? Such a suiting of Objects, such a Pretension of Reasonings, such an Appearance of Things desirable? All in Heaven and Earth but the infinite All-seeing God, are utterly ignorant of these Things. In this unsearchable Heart, dwells Sin, and much of its Security, and consequently of its Strength lies in this, that it is past our finding out. We fight with an Enemy whose secret Strength we cannot discover, whom we cannot follow into its Retirements. Hence often, when we are ready to think Sin quite ruined; after a while we find it was but out of Sight. It hath Coverts and Retreats in an unsearchable Heart, whither we cannot pursue it. The Soul may persuade itself all is well, when Sin may be safe in the hidden Darknes of the Mind, which 'tis impossible he should look into; for whatever makes manifest is Light. It may suppose the Will of Sinning is utterly taken away, when yet there is an unsearchable Reserve for a more suitable Object, a more vigorous Temptation. Hath a Man had a Contest with any Lust, and a blessed Victory over it by the Holy Ghost; when he thinks it is utterly expelled he ere long finds that it was but retired. It can lie so close in the Mind's Darknes, in the Disorder of the Affections, that no Eye can discover it. The best of our Wisdom is but to watch its first Appearances, to catch its first under Earth Heavings and Workings, and to set ourselves in Opposition to them; for to follow it into the secret

Corners

Corners of the Heart, that we cannot do. It is true, there is yet a Relief in this Case, namely, that He to whom the Work of destroying Sin in us, is committed, namely, the Holy Ghost, comes with his Ax to the very Root, neither is there any Thing that is not open and naked unto Him. But we in a Way of Duty may hence see what an Enemy we have to deal with.

(2.). As it is unsearchable, so it is deceitful; it is *deceitful above all Things*. There is great Deceit in the Dealings of Men in the World, great in their Counsels and Contrivances, in Reference to their Affairs private and publick; great Deceit in their Words and Actings: The World is full of Deceit and Fraud. But all this is nothing to the Deceit that is in Man's Heart towards Himself. Now Deceitfulness added to Unsearchableness, gives a great Addition of Strength to Sin. I speak not yet of the Deceitfulness of Sin itself, but the Deceitfulness of the Heart where it is seated.

Now this Deceitfulness of the Heart, lies chiefly in two Things.

[1.] THAT it abounds in Contradictions, so that it is not to be found and dealt with according to any constant Rule, and Way of Procedure. There are some Men that seem to be made up of Contradictions; sometimes to be very Wise in their Affairs, sometimes very Foolish, very Open, and very Reserved; very Facile, and very Obstinate; very easy to be Intreated, and very Revengeful, all in a remarkable Height. This is generally accounted a bad Character: But in general, in Respect of moral Good or Evil, it is so with the Heart of every Man; flaming hot, and Key cold; Weak, and yet Stubborn; Obstinate, and Facile. The

Frame of the Heart is ready to contradict itself every Moment. Now you would think you had it all in such a Way; anon it is quite otherwise: So that none know what to expect from it. The rise of this is the Disorder that is brought upon all its Faculties by Sin. GOD created them all in a perfect Harmony and Union. The Mind and Reason were in perfect Subjection and Subordination to GOD; the Will answered in its Choice of Good, the Discovery made of it by the Mind; the Affections constantly and evenly followed the Understanding. The Mind's Subjection to GOD was the Spring of the orderly and harmonious Motion of the Soul, and all the Wheels in it. That being disturbed by Sin, the rest of the Faculties move cross and contrary one to another; the Will chuseth not the Good which the Mind discovers; the Affections delight not in that which the Will chuseth, but all jar and interfere, cross and rebel against each other. This we have got by our falling from GOD. Hence sometimes the Will leads, the Judgment follows: Yea, commonly the Affections that should attend upon all, get the Sovereignty, and draw the whole Soul captive after them. And hence it is, that the Heart is made up of so many Contradictions. Sometimes the Mind retains its Sovereignty, and the Affections are in Subjection. This puts a good Face upon Things. Immediately the Rebellion of the Affections, or the Obstinacy of the Will take Place, and the whole Scene is changed. This makes the Heart deceitful above all Things; it is not constant to itself, is under no certain Conduct, but, hath a Rotation in itself, where oft-times the Feet lead and guide the Whole.

[2.] ITS Deceit lies in its full Promisings upon the first Appearance of Things. And this also proceeds from the same Principle. Sometimes the whole

whole Heart appears in a fair Frame, all promiseth to be well. Within a while the whole Frame is changed; the Mind was not at all affected; the Affections are gone off, and all the fair Promises of the Heart are depraved with them. Now add this Deceitfulness, and we shall find, that the Difficulty of dealing with Sin in its Seat and Throne, will be exceedingly encreased. A deceiving and a deceived Heart, who can deal with it? Especially considering that the Heart employs all its Deceits unto the Service of Sin. All the Disorder that is in the Heart, all its false Promises, and fair Appearances, promote the Interest of Sin. Hence God cautions the People to look to it, lest *their own Heart should entice and deceive them.*

WHO can mention the Treacheries that lie in the Heart of Man? It is not for nothing that the Holy Ghost so expresth it, *It is deceitful above all Things*; uncertain in what it doth, and false in what it promiseth. And hence moreover it is, amongst other Causes, that in the Pursuit of our War against Sin, we have not only the old Work to go over and over, but new Work still; still new Stratagems to deal with, as the Manner will be where Unsearchableness and Deceitfulness are to be contended with.

THERE are many other Properties of this Seat of Sin, which might be insisted on, but that would too far divert us; and therefore I shall pass these over with some few Considerations.

(I.) NEVER let us reckon that our Work in contending against Sin, in crucifying, mortifying and subduing of it, is at an End. The Place of its Habitation is unsearchable; and when we may think we have thoroughly won the Field, there is still

some Reserve remaining, that we knew not of. Many Conquerors have been ruined by their Carelessness after a Victory; and many have been spiritually wounded after great Successes against this Enemy. *David* was so, his great Surprizal into Sin was after a long Profession, manifold Experiences of God, and watchful keeping himself from his Iniquity. And hence in Part hath it come to pass, that the Profession of many hath declined in their old Age. They have given over the Work of Mortifying of Sin, before their Work was at an End. There is no Way for us to pursue Sin in its unsearchable Habitation, but by being Endless in our Pursuit. And that Command of the Apostle which we have, *Col. iii. 5.* on this Account is as necessary for them to observe, who are towards the End of their Race, as those that are but at the Beginning of it. *Mortify therefore your Members that are on the Earth;* be always doing it whilst you live. It is true, great Ground is obtained, when the Work is vigorously and constantly carried on. But yet the Work must be endless. If we give over we shall quickly see this Enemy exerting itself with new Strength. It may be, under some great Affliction, or in some eminent Enjoyment of God, in the Sense of the Sweetness of blessed Communion with *Christ*, we have been ready to say, that there was an End of Sin, that it was dead and gone for ever. But have we not found the contrary by Experience? Hath it not manifested that it was only retired into some unsearchable Recesses of the Heart; let us then reckon on it, that there is no Way to have our Work done, but by always doing of it.

(2.) *IT* hath its Residence in that which is various, inconstant, deceitful above all Things, this calls for perpetual Watchfulness against it. An open Enemy that deals by Violence only, always gives

gives some Respite; you know where to have him, and what he is doing, so as that sometimes you may sleep without Fear: But against Adversaries that deal by Deceit and Treachery, which are long Swords, and reach at the greatest Distance, nothing will give Security but perpetual Watchfulness. It is impossible we should in this Case be too Jealous, Doubtful, Suspicious, or Watchful. The Heart hath a Thousand Wiles, and if we are in the least off our Watch, we may be sure to be surprised. Hence are those reiterated Commands and Cautions given for Watching, for being Circumspect, Diligent, Careful. There is no living for them who have to deal with an Enemy deceitful above all Things, unless they persist in such a Frame. All Cautions that are given in the Case are necessary, especially that, *Remember not to Believe*. Doth the Heart promise fair? Rest not on it, but say to the LORD *Christ*, LORD, do thou undertake for me. Doth the Sun shine fair in the Morning? Reckon not on a fair Day; the Clouds may arise and fall; though the Morning give a fair Appearance of Serenity and Peace, turbulent Affections may arise, and cloud the Soul with Sin and Darknes.

(3.) COMMIT then the whole Matter with all Care and Diligence, unto Him who can search the Heart to the uttermost, and knows how to prevent all its Treacheries. In the Things before mentioned lies our Duty, but here lies our Safety. There is no treacherous Corner in our Hearts, but He can search it to the uttermost; there is no Deceit in them but He can disappoint it. This Course *David* takes, *Psal. cxxxix*. After he had set forth the Omnipresence of GOD, and his Omniscience, *ver. 8, 9, 10*. he makes Improvement of it, *ver. 23*. *Search me, O LORD, and try me*. As if he had said, It is but a little that I know of my deceitful Heart,

only I would be sincere, I would not have reserves for Sin therein; wherefore do thou, who art present with my Heart, who knowest my Thoughts long before, undertake this Work, perform it thoroughly, for thou alone art able so to do.



CHAP. II.

Indwelling SIN, Enmity against GOD.

WE have seen the Seat of this Sin. In the next Place I shall consider one Property of it, that belongs unto its Nature: And this always wherever it is. And this is that which is expressed by the Apostle, *Rom. viii. 7. The carnal Mind is Enmity against GOD*; that which is here called, *φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς, the Wisdom of the Flesh*, is the same with the Sin, which we insist on. And what says he hereof? It is *Enmity against GOD*.

1. It is not only an Enemy, for so possibly some Reconciliation might be made, but it is Enmity itself, and so not capable of accepting any Terms of Peace. Enemies may be reconciled, but Enmity cannot. Yea, the only Way to reconcile Enemies, is to destroy the Enmity. So the Apostle in another Place tells us, *Rom. v. 10. We who were Enemies, are reconciled unto GOD*; that is a Work brought about by the Blood of *Christ*; the reconciling of the greatest Enemies. But when he comes to speak of Enmity, there is no Way for it, but it must be abolished, *Ephes. ii. 15. Having abolished*
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in his Flesh the Enmity: There is no Way to deal with Enmity, but by its Abolition or Destruction.

AND this also lies in it, that every Part of it, the least Degree of it that can possibly remain in any one, whilst there is any Thing of its Nature, is Enmity still. It may not be so effectual in Operation, but it is Enmity still. As every Drop of Poyson is Poyson, and will infect, and every Spark of Fire is Fire, and will burn; so every Thing of Sin, the least, the least of it, is Enmity, it will poyson, it will burn. Mortification abates its Force, but doth not change its Nature. Grace changeth the Nature of Man, but nothing can change the Nature of Sin. It is Enmity still, Sin still. This then by it is our Condition. *GOD is Love*, 1 John iv. 8. He is so in Himself, eternally excellent and desirable above all. He is so to us, He is so in the Blood of his Son, and in all the inexpressible Fruits of it, by which we are what we are, and wherein all our future Hopes and Expectations are wrapped up. Against this GOD we carry about us an Enmity; an Enmity that is incapable of Cure or Reconciliation. Destroyed it may be, it shall be, but cured it cannot be.

AND herein lies no small Part of its Power; it can admit of no Terms of Peace, of no Composition. There may be a Composition, where there is no Reconciliation. There may be a Truce, where there is no Peace. But with this Enemy we can obtain neither the one nor the other. It is never quiet, conquering, nor conquered. It is in vain for a Man to have any Expectation of Rest from his Lust, but by its Death. Some in the Tumult of their Corruptions seek for Quietness by labouring to satisfy them, *making Provision for the Flesh to fulfil the Lusts thereof*; as the Apostle speaks, *Rom. xiii. 14.* This is
to

to slack Fire by the Wood and Oyl. As all the Fuel in the World, all the Fabrick of the Creation that is combustible, being cast into the Fire, will not at all satisfy it, but increase it; so it is with Satisfaction given to Sin by Sinning, it doth but inflame and increase. If a Man will part with some of his Goods unto an Enemy, it may satisfy him; but Enmity will have all, and is not one whit the more satisfied than if it had received nothing at all. Like the lean Cattle that were never the less hungry, for having devoured the Fat. You cannot bargain with the Fire to take but so much of your Houses, ye have no Way but to quench it. It is in this Case, as it is in the Contest between a wise Man and a Fool, *Prov. xxix. 9. Whether he rage or laugh, there is no Rest.* Whatever Temper he be in, his importunate Folly makes him troublesome. It is so with this indwelling Sin, whether it rage or laugh, whether it violently tumultuate, as it will do on Provocations and Temptations, or whether it seem to be pleased, all is one, there is no Peace, no Rest to be had with it. Had it been of any other Nature, some other Way might have been fixed on, but now all the Relief the Soul hath must lye in its Ruin.

2. It is not only Enmity, but Enmity against GOD. It hath chosen a great Enemy indeed. It fights against the Spirit, or the spiritual Principle that is in us, to conquer it; it fights against our Souls to destroy them. But its proper Object is GOD, it is Enmity against GOD; GOD as the Law-Giver, GOD as holy, GOD as the Author of the Gospel. Why doth it render the Soul carnal, unbelieving, unspiritual, weary, wandring? It is because of its Enmity to GOD, whom the Soul aims to have Communion with in Duty. It hath, as it were, that Command from Satan, which the *Affyrans*

rians had from their King, *Fight neither with Small nor Great, save only with the King of Israel*, 1 Kings xxii. 31. It is neither great nor small, but GOD Himself, the King of *Israel*, that Sin sets itself against. There lies the secret Reason of all its Opposition to Good, even because it relates to GOD. As the *Affyrians*, because of his Shew of a King, assaulted *Jehosaphat*; but when they found that it was not *Ahab*, turned back from pursuing of him. So when there is a Shew of the Worship of GOD, Sin may make Head against it at first, but when the Duty cries out in the Heart, that indeed GOD is not there; Sin turns away to seek out its proper Enemy, even GOD Himself. And hence do many poor Creatures spend their Days in dismal Superstitions, without any great Reluctancy from within, when others cannot be suffered freely to watch with *Christ* in a spiritual Manner one Hour.

It is thus also in Respect of all Propensity to Sin, as well as Aversion from GOD. It is GOD Himself that is aimed at. It is true, the Pleasures of Sin greatly influence sensual Affections; but it is the Holiness and Authority of GOD, that Sin itself rises up against: It hates the Yoke of the LORD; *Thou hast been weary of me*, saith GOD to Sinners, and that during their Performance of Abundance of Duties. Every Act of Sin is a Fruit of being weary of GOD. Thus *Job* tells us what lies at the Bottom in the Heart of Sinners; *They say to the LORD, Depart from us*; it is Enmity against Him. Here lies the formal Nature of every Sin, it is an Opposition to GOD, a Casting off his Yoke, a Breaking off the Dependence which the Creature ought to have on the Creator. And the Apostle, *Rom. viii. 7.* gives the Reason why he affirms the carnal Mind to be Enmity against GOD; namely, because it is not subject to the Will of GOD, nor indeed can it. It
never

never is, nor will, nor can be subject to GOD, its whole Nature consisting in Opposition to Him. The Soul wherein it is, may be subject to the Law of GOD, but Sin will not be in Subjection.

THIS Enmity against GOD is universal. Some Contentions are bounded to particular Concerns, this is about one Thing, that about another. It is not so here; the Enmity is absolute and universal, as are all Enmities that are grounded in the Nature of the Things themselves: For [1.] it is universal to all of GOD: And [2.] it is universal in all of the Soul.

[1.] IT is universal to all of GOD. If there were any Thing of GOD, his Nature, Properties, Will, his Law or Gospel, any Duty of Obedience to Him, of Communion with Him, that Sin had not an Enmity against, the Soul might have a Retreat within itself, by applying itself to that of GOD, to that of Duty towards Him, to that of Communion with Him, that Sin would make no Opposition against. But the Enmity lies against GOD, and all of GOD, and every Thing wherein we have to do with Him. It is not subject to the Law, nor any Part nor Parcel, Word or Tittle of the Law. Sin is Enmity to GOD, as GOD, and therefore to all of GOD; not his Goodness, not his Holiness, not his Promises only: There is not any Thing of Him, which it doth not make Head against; nor any Duty, private, publick, in the Heart, in external Works, which it opposeth not. And the nearer any Thing is to GOD, the greater is its Enmity unto it. The more of Spirituality is in any Thing, the greater is its Enmity. That which hath most of GOD, hath most of its Opposition. Concerning them in whom this Law is predominant, GOD says, *Ye have set at nought all my Counsels, and you would have none of my* *Reproof,*

Reproof, Prov. i. 25. Not this or that Part of GOD's Counsel, but all his Counsel, whatever He calleth for, in every Particular; all is set at Nought, and nothing of His Reproof attended to. A Man would think it not strange that Sin should maintain an Enmity against GOD in his Law, which comes to condemn it; but it raiseth a greater Enmity against Him in his Gospel, wherein He tenders Mercy and Pardon, and that meerly because more of the glorious Properties of GOD's Nature, more of his Excellencies and Condescension, is manifested therein.

[2.] IT is universal in all of the Soul. Would this Law of Sin have contented itself to have subdued any one Faculty of the Soul, would it have left any one at Liberty, any one Affection free from its Yoke and Bondage, it might possibly have been with more Ease opposed, or subdued. But when *Christ* comes with his spiritual Power upon the Soul to conquer it to Himself, he hath no quiet Landing-Place. He can set Foot on no Ground but what He must fight for and conquer. Not the Mind, not an Affection, not the Will only, but all is secured against Him. And when Grace hath made its Entrance; yet Sin will dwell in all its Coasts. Were any Thing in the Soul at perfect Freedom, there a Stand might be made to drive it from all the Rest of its Holds: But it is universal, and Wars in the whole Soul. The Mind hath its own Darknes and Vanity to wrestle with; the Will its own Stubbornness, Obstinacy, and Perverseness, every Affection its own Frowardness and Aversion from GOD and Sensuality; so that one cannot yield Relief unto another, as they ought; they have, as it were, their Hands full at Home. Hence it is that our Knowledge is imperfect, our Obedience weak, Love not immixed, Fear not pure, Delight not free and noble.

[3.] HERE-

[3.] HEREUNTO might be added its Constancy. It is constant unto itself, it wavers not, it hath no Thoughts of yielding, notwithstanding the powerful Opposition that is made to it both by the Law and Gospel.

WHAT hath been delivered might give us a little Sense of it, and stir up to Watchfulness. What can be of a more sad Consideration than that we should carry about us constantly that which is Enmity against GOD, and that not in this or that Particular, but in all that He is, and in all wherein He hath revealed Himself?

THERE are two general Heads of the Working of Enmity, Averfation, and Opposition.

I. AVERFATION. Our Saviour describing the Enmity that was between Himself and the Teachers of the *Jews*, saith in the Prophet, *My Soul loathed them, and their Soul also abhorred me*, Zech. vii. 8. Where there is mutual Enmity, there is mutual Averfation, Loathing, and Abomination. So it was between the *Jews* and the *Samaritans*, they were Enemies, and abhorred one another; as *John* iv. 9.

2. OPPOSITION, or contending against one another, is the next Product of Enmity, *Isa*. lxiii. 10. *He was turned to be their Enemy, and he fought against them*; speaking of GOD towards the People. Where there is Enmity, there will be Fighting, it is the proper and natural Product of it. Now both these Effects are found in this Sin.

I. THERE is an Averfion in it to GOD, and every Thing of GOD. All Indisposition unto Duty, wherein Communion with GOD is to be obtained, all Weariness of Duty, all Carnality or Formality under

under Duty, all springs from this Root. The wise Man cautions us against this Evil, *Ecclef. v. 1.* *When thou goest to the House of GOD, keep thy Foot.* Hast thou any spiritual Duty to perform, and dost thou design the attaining any Communion with GOD? Look to thyself, take Care of thy Affections, they will be wandering, and that from their Aver- sation to what thou hast in Hand. There is not any Good that we would do, wherein we may not find this Aver- sation exercising itself.

LET us a little consider this Aver- sation in such Acts of Obedience, wherein there is no Concern- ment but that of GOD and the Soul. In publick Duties there may be a Mixture of other Conside- rations. But let us take into Consideration the Du- ties of Retirement, as private Prayer and Medita- tion, or else extraordinary Duties, or Duties to be performed in an extraordinary Manner.

(1.) IN these will this Aver- sation often discover itself. A secret Striving will be in them about close and cordial Dealing with GOD. Unless the Hand of GOD in his Spirit be high and strong upon the Soul, even when Convictions, real Esteem of GOD, and Communion with Him, have carried the Soul into its Closet, yet if there be not the Vigour and Power of spiritual Life constantly at Work, there will be a secret Loathness unto Duty; yea, some- times there will be a violent Inclination to the con- trary; so that the Soul had rather do any Thing, than vigorously apply itself. Here GOD and the Soul are immediately concerned, and it is a great Conquest to do what we would, though we come exceedingly short of what we should do.

(2.) IT discovers itself in the Mind also. When we address ourselves to GOD in *Christ*, we are, as

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Job speaks, to fill our Mouths with Arguments, Chap. xxiii. 4. that we may be able to plead with Him, as he calls upon us to do, *Isaiah* xliii. 26. *Put me in Remembrance, let us plead together.* The Sum is, that the Mind should be furnished with Considerations that are prevailing with God, and be in Readiness to plead them, in the most spiritual Manner. Now is there no Difficulty to get the Mind into such a Frame, as to lay out itself to the utmost in this Work? To be clear, steady, and constant in its Duty? To make use of its Stores of Promises and Experiences? It starts, wanders, flags, all from this secret Aversion unto Communion with God. Some complain that they can make no Work of Meditation, they cannot bend their Minds unto it. I confess there may be a great Cause of this, in their Want of a right Understanding of the Duty itself. But yet this secret Enmity hath its Hand also, both in their Minds and in their Affections. And here hath been the Beginning of the Apostasy of many. I am persuaded there are very few that apostatise from a Profession of any Continuance, but their Entrance was either some great and notorious Sin that bloodied their Consciences, tainted their Affections, and intercepted all Delight in God; or else it was a Course of Neglect in private Duties, arising from a Weariness of contending against that powerful Aversion which they found in themselves unto them.

As it is in respect of private, so it is also in respect of publick Duties, that have any Thing extraordinary in them. What Strivings, Struglings, and Pleadings are there in the Heart about them, especially against Spirituality of them! Yea, in and under them, will not the Mind and Affections sometimes be entangled with Things, new and strange unto them, such as at the Time of the least serious

Business

Business, a Man would not deign to take into his Thoughts? But if the least Liberty, or Advantage, be given to Indwelling Sin, if it be not perpetually watched over, it will work to a strange and an unexpected Issue. In brief, let the Soul uncloath any Duty whatever, private or publick, any Thing that is called Good, let a Man divest it of all outward Respects which secretly insinuate themselves into the Mind, and give it some Complacency in what it is about, and he shall assuredly find somewhat of the Power, and some of the Effects of this Averſation. It begins in Loathneſs and Indiſpoſition, goes on with intangling the Mind and Affections with other Things, and will end, if not prevented, in Wearineſs of GOD.

[1.] THE great Means to prevent the Effects of this Averſation, is the conſtant keeping the Soul in an univerſally holy Frame. As this weakens the whole Law of Sin, ſo particularly this Averſation. It is this Frame only that will enable us to ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal. lvii. 7. My Heart is fixed, O God, my Heart is fixed.* It is utterly impoſſible to keep the Heart in a prevailing holy Frame in any one Duty, unleſs it be ſo in all and every one. A conſtant even Temper in all Duties, in all Ways, is the only Preſervative for any one Way. Let not him who is neglective in publick perſuade himſelf, that all will be clear and eaſy in private, or on the contrary. There is an Harmony in Obedience, break but one Part and you interrupt the Whole.

[2.] LABOUR to prevent the very Beginnings of the Workings of this Averſation; let Grace be beforehand with it in every Duty. We are directed, *1 Pet. iv. 7. to Watch unto Prayer*; and as it is unto Prayer, ſo unto every Duty; that is, to conſider and take Care that we be not hindered from within,

nor from without, as to a due Performance of it. Watch against Temptations to oppose them, watch against the Averſation that is in Sin to prevent it. As we are not to *give Place to Satan*, no more are we to Sin. If it be not prevented in its firſt Attempts, it will prevail.

[3.] THOUGH it do its worſt, yet be ſure it never prevail to a Conqueſt. Be ſure you be not wearied out by its Importunity; do not faint by its Oppoſition. Take the Apoſtle's Advice, *Heb. vi. 11. We deſire that every one of you, do ſhew the ſame Diligence to the full Assurance of Hope unto the End, that ye be not ſlothful.* Still hold out in the ſame Diligence. There are many Ways whereby Men are driven from a conſtant holy Performance of Duties, all of them dangerous, if not pernicious to the Soul. Some are diverted by Buſineſs, ſome by Company, ſome by the Power of Temptations, ſome diſcouraged by their own Darkneſs; but none ſo dangerous as this, when the Soul gives over in Part, or in Whole, as wearied by the Averſation of Sin unto it. Our Saviour's Inſtruction is, we ought *always to pray and not to faint*, Luke xviii. 1. Oppoſition will ariſe, none ſo bitter and keen as that from our own Hearts; if we faint we periſh. *Take Heed leaſt you be wearied*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *and faint in your Minds*, Heb. xii. 3. Such a Fainting as is attended with a Wearineſs, and that with a giving Place to the Averſation working in our Hearts, is to be avoided, if we would not periſh. That which is now ſo difficult, will increaſe in Difficulty if we give Way unto it. But if we abide in our Station, we ſhall prevail, the Mouth of the LORD hath ſpoken it.

[4.] CARRY about a conſtant humbling Senſe of this cloſe Averſation unto Spiritualneſs that yet lies in

in our Nature. If Men find the Efficacy of it, what Consideration can be more Powerful to bring them to humble Walking with GOD? That after all the Discoveries that GOD hath made of Himself unto them, all the Kindness they have received from Him; his doing of them Good and not Evil in all Things, there should yet be such an Heart of Unkindness and Unbelief, as to have an Aversion to Communion with Him: How ought the Thoughts of it to cast us into the Dust, to fill us with Shame and Self-aborrancy? What have we found in GOD in any of our Approaches, or Addresses to Him, that it should be thus with us? What Iniquity have we found in Him? *Hath He been a Wilderness unto us, or a Land of Darknes?* Did we ever lose any Thing by drawing nigh unto Him? Nay, hath not therein lien all the Rest and Peace which we have obtained? Is not He the Fountain and Spring of all our Mercies? Hath He not bid us Welcome at our Coming? Have we not received from Him more than Heart can conceive, or Tongue express? What ails then our foolish and wretched Hearts, to harbour such a cursed Dislike of Him and his Ways? Let us be ashamed and astonished at the Consideration of it, and walk in an humble Sense of it all our Days.



CHAP. III.

*The Work of this Enmity against GOD, by
Way of Opposition.*

HOW this Enmity worketh by Way of Aversion hath been declared.

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THE second Way whereby it exerts itself is Opposition. Enmity will oppose and contend with that wherewith it is at Enmity. It is so in Things natural and moral. As Light and Darknes, Heat and Cold, so Virtue and Vice oppose each other. So it is with Sin and Grace, saith the Apostle, these are contrary one to the other, *Gal. v. 17. ἀντίκειται ἀλλήλοις*, they are placed, and set in mutual Opposition, and that continually and constantly.

Now there are two Ways whereby Enemies manage an Opposition.

(1.) BY Force. And (2.) By Fraud. And both these are made Use of by Sin in its Enmity against GOD.

(1.) I SHALL begin with the First; or its Acting in open Opposition to GOD.

IN this there are four Things expressing so many distinct Degrees in its Progress.

[1.] ITS general Inclination, *It lusteth*, *Gal. v. 17.*

[2.] ITS particular Way of contending, *It Fights or Wars*, *Rom. vii. 23. James iv. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 11.*

[3.] ITS Success in this Conquest, *It brings the Soul into Captivity to the Law of Sin*, *Rom. vii. 23.*

[4.] ITS Growth and Rage upon Success, it comes up to Madness, as an enraged Enemy will do, *Eccles. ix. 3.* All which we must speak to in Order.

[1.] IN

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[1.] IN general it is said to Lust, *the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit*, Gal. v. 17. This Word expresseth the general Nature of that Opposition which Sin maketh against GOD, and his Grace in them that believe. And therefore the least Degree of that Opposition is expressed hereby. Hence all the Actings of Sin are called the *Lusts of the Flesh*, Gal. v. 16. *Ye shall not fulfill the Lusts of the Flesh*. Nor are these Lusts of the Flesh those only whereby Men act their Sensuality, in Riot, Drunkenness, Uncleaness, and the like, but they comprehend all the Actings of Sin whatever, in all the Faculties and Affections of the Soul. Thus *Ephes. ii. 3*. We have Mention of the Desires, or Wills, or Lusts of the Mind, as well as of the Flesh. The Mind hath its Lusts, no less than the sensual Appetite, which seems sometimes more properly to be called *the Flesh*. And in the Products of these Lusts, there are Defilements of the Spirit, as well as of the *Flesh*, 2 *Cor. vii. 1*. That is, of the Mind and Understanding, as well as of the Appetite, and the Body. Yea, by the *Flesh* in this Matter, the whole old Man is intended. And this *Flesh* lusteth, which is the general Foundation of all its Opposition unto GOD. This it doth two Ways.

1.) IN an hidden close Propensity unto all Evil. This lies in it habitually. Whilst a Man is in the State of Nature, fully under the Power and Dominion of this Law of Sin, it is said, that *every Fingment of his Heart is Evil, and that continually*, Gen. vi. 5. And where the Power of it is broken, yet in its own Nature it hath still an habitual Propensity unto that which is Evil, wherein its Lusting doth consist.

It is with indwelling Sin as with a River; whilst the Springs of it are open, and Waters continually supplied

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supplied to its Streams, set a Damm before it, and it causeth it to rise and dwell, untill it bear down all, or overflow the Banks. Let these Waters be dried up in some good Measure, in the Springs, and the Remainder may be restrained. But still as long as there is any running Water it will constantly press upon what stands before it, according to its Weight and Strength. And if by any Means it make a Passage, it will proceed. So is it with indwelling Sin; whilst the Springs of it are open, in vain is it for Men to set a Damm before it by their Convictions, Resolutions, Vows and Promises. They may check it for a While, but it will increase, rise high, and rage at one Time or another, untill it bears down all those Convictions and Resolutions, or make itself an underground Passage by some secret Lust that shall give a full Vent unto it. But now suppose the Springs of it are much dried up by regenerating Grace, the Streams of it abated by Holiness, yet whilst any Thing remains of it, it will be pressing to have Vent, to press forward into actual Sin. And this is its Lustings.

AND this habitual Propensity in it is discovered two Ways:

(I. IN its unexpected Surprizals of the Soul into foolish sinful Imaginations, which it looked not for, nor was any Occasion administered to them. It is with indwelling Sin, as it is with the contrary Principle of sanctifying Grace. This gives the Soul many a blessed Surprizal. It often brings forth an holy Frame in the Heart and Mind, when we have had no previous rational Considerations to Work them there. And this manifest it to be an habitual Principle prevailing in the Mind. And thus also is it with indwelling Sin; e're the Soul is aware, without any Provocation or Temptation, when it knows

knows not, it is cast into a vain and foolish Frame. Sin produceth its Figments secretly in the Heart, and prevents the Mind's Consideration of what it is about. And these Surprizals, if the Soul be not awake to take speedy Care for the Prevention of their Tendency, do often set all on Fire, and engage the Mind and Affections in actual Sin.

(2. THIS habitual Inclination manifests itself in its Readiness to close with every Temptation. As we know it is in the Nature of Fire to burn, because it immediately lays hold on whatever is Combustible. There was from indwelling Sin a continual Disposition to be Slipping, Stumbling, Halting on every Occasion. There is nothing so Vain, Foolish, Ridiculous, nothing so Vile and Abominable, but if it be proposed unto the Soul in a Way of Temptation, there is that in this Law of Sin, which is ready to answer it; before it be descried by Grace. And this is the first Thing in this Lust of Sin, it consists in its habitual Propensity unto Evil, manifesting itself by the involuntary Surprizals of the Soul unto Sin, and its Readiness to joyn with all Temptations whatsoever.

2.) ITS Lust consists in its actual pressing after that which is Evil, and actual Opposition unto that which is Good. The former Instances shewed its constant Readiness to this Work, this now treats of the Work itself. It is not only ready, but for the most Part always engaged. It Lusteth, saith the Holy Ghost, it doth so continually. It stirreth in the Soul by one Act or other constantly, almost as the Blood in the Veins. This the Apostle calls its Tempting. *Jam. i. 14. Every Man is tempted of his own Lust.* Now what is it to be tempted? It is to have that proposed to a Man's Consideration, which if he close with, it is Sin unto him. This is

is Sin's Trade. It is raising up in the Heart, and proposing to the Mind and Affections, that which is Evil, trying, as it were, whether the Soul will close with its Suggestions, or how far it can carry them on, though it do not wholly prevail. It is restlessly and continually raising up, and proposing innumerable various Forms and Appearances of Evil, in this or that Kind, indeed in every Kind, that the Nature of Man is capable to exercise Corruption in. Something or other, in Matter, or Manner, or Circumstance, inordinate, unspiritual, unanswerable unto the Rule, it hatcheth and proposeth unto the Soul.

[2.] **THERE** is its particular Way of contending, it Fights or Wars; that is, it acts with Strength and Violence, as Men do in War.

1.) **IT** Lufts, stirring and moving inordinate Figments in the Mind, Desires in the Appetite and the Affections. But,

2.) **IT** rests not there, it cannot rest; it urgeth, presseth and pursueth its Proposals with Earnestness, Strength and Vigour, fighting, and contending, and warring to obtain its Purpose. Would it meerly propose Things, and immediately acquiesce in the Sentence of the Mind that the Thing is Evil against **GOD**, and not farther to be insisted on, much Sin might be prevented. But it rests not here, it proceeds to carry on its Design, and that with Earnestness and Contention.

Now this Fighting or Warring of Sin consists in two Things:

(1. **IN** its Rebellion against Grace.

(2. **IN**

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(2. IN its assaulting the Soul, contending for Rule over it.

THIS Rebellion appears in two Things:

1.] IN the Opposition it makes to the general Purpose of the Soul.

2.] IN the Opposition it makes to particular Duties.

1.] IN the Opposition it makes to the general Purpose of the Soul. There is none in whom is the Spirit of *Christ*, but it is his general Design to walk in Conformity to Him in all Things. Even from the inward Frame of the Heart, to the whole Compass of his outward Actions, so it is with him. This the Apostle sets forth, *Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14.* *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one Thing I do, forgetting those Things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those Things which are before, I press toward the Mark for the Prize of the High Calling of GOD in Christ Jesus.* He useth three Words excellently expressing the Soul's universal Pursuit of this Purpose of Heart in Cleaving to GOD. First, saith he, *διώκω*; *ver. 12.* I follow after: The Word signifies properly to persecute, which with what Earnestness and Diligence it is usually done, we know. Secondly, *ἑπικτείνομαι*; I reach forward, Reaching with great Intention of Spirit and Affections. It is a great and constant Endeavour that is expressed in that Word. Thirdly, *κατὰ σκοπὸν διώκω*; I press towards the Mark, that is, Even as Men that are running for a Prize. All
set

set forth the Vigour, Earnestness, Diligence and Constancy that is used in the Pursuit of this Purpose. And this the Nature of the Principle of Grace requireth in them in whom it is. But yet we see with what Failings their Pursuit of this Course is attended. The Frame of the Heart is changed, the Heart is stolen away, the Affections intangled, Eruptions of Unbelief and distemper'd Passions discover'd, carnal Wisdom with all its Attendants are set on Work, all contrary to the general Principle and Purpose of the Soul. And all this from the Rebellion of this Law of Sin, stirring up the Heart to Disobedience.

2.] IT rebels also in Respect to particular Duties. It raiseth a Combustion in the Soul against the particular Commands of the Law of Grace. Take an Instance in Prayer. A Man addresseth himself unto that Duty, he would not only perform it, but he would perform it in that Manner that the Nature of the Duty, and his own Condition require. He would pray in the Spirit, fervently, with Sighs and Groans that cannot be uttered; in Faith with Love and Delight, pouring forth his Soul to the LORD; but he often shall find a Rebellion, a Fighting of the Law of Sin in this Matter. He shall find Difficulty to get any Thing done, who tho't to do all Things. I do not say, that it is thus always, but it is so when Sin wars and rebels, which expresseth an especial Acting of its Power.

(2. IT doth not only rebel, but it assaults the Soul; it sets upon the Law of the Mind and Grace, which is the second Part of its Warring, 1 Pet. ii. 11. *They fight, or war against the Soul.* Jam. iv. 1. *They fight, or war in your Members.* Peter shews what they fight against, namely the Soul, and the Law of Grace therein: James, what they fight
by

by, namely the Members, or the Corruption that is in our mortal Bodies. *Ἀντιπαρισταία* is to rebel against a superior, *επαρισταία* is to assault or war for Superiority. It takes the Part of an Assailant as well of a Resister. It makes Attempts for Rule and Sovereignty, as well as opposeth the Rule of Grace. Now all War and Fighting hath somewhat of Violence in it, and there is therefore some Violence in that Acting of Sin, which the Scripture calls Fighting and Warring. And this assailing Efficacy of Sin, as distinguished from its Rebelling, consists in these Things.

1.] All its positive Actings in stirring up to Sin by the Vanity of the Mind, or the Sensuality of the Affections, it sets upon the Soul, when the Law of Grace is not actually putting it on Duty, so that therein it doth not rebel, but assault.

2.] ITS Importunity seems to be noted in this Expression. Enemies in War are restless, pressing and importunate. So is the Law of Sin. Doth it set upon the Soul? Cast off its Motions, it returns; rebuke them by the Power of Grace, they withdraw for awhile, and return again. Set before them the Cross of *Christ*, they do as those that came to take Him. They went backwards, and fell unto the Ground, but they arose again and laid Hands on Him. Sin gives Place for a Season, but returns and presseth on the Soul again. Mind it of the Love of God in *Christ*, though it be stricken, yet it gives not over. Present Hell-fire unto it, it rusheth into the Midst of those Flames: Reproach it with its Folly and Madness, it knows no Shame, but presseth on still. Let the Thoughts of the Mind strive to fly from it, it follows as on the Wings of the Wind. And by this Importunity it wearies and wears out the

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Soul, and if the greater Remedy, *Rom. viii. 13.* come not timely, it prevails to a Conquest. There is nothing more marvellous nor dreadful in the Working of Sin, than this its Importunity. The Soul knows not what to make of it; it dislikes, abhors, abominates the Evil it tends to; it despiseth the Thoughts of it, hates them as Hell, and yet is by itself imposed on with them.

3.] It carries on its War, by entangling the Affections, and drawing them into a Combination against the Mind. Let Grace be enthroned in the Mind, yet if Sin entangles the Affections, it hath gotten a Foot from whence it continually assaults the Soul. Hence the great Duty of Mortification is chiefly directed to take Place upon the Affections, *Col. iii. 5. Mortify therefore your Members which are upon the Earth, Fornication, Uncleannefs, inordinate Affection, Concupiscence and Covetousnefs which is Idolatry.* The Members that are upon the Earth, are our Affections. For in the outward Part of the Body, Sin is not seated: In particular, not Covetousnefs which is there innumeraled to be mortified amongst our Members, that are on the Earth. Yea, after Grace hath taken Possession of the Soul, the Affections the principal Seat of the Remainders of Sin. And when Sin can possess any Affection, Love, Delight, Fear, it will make fearful Assaults upon the Soul. For Instance, hath it got the Love of any one entangled with the World, the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, or the Pride of Life? How will it take Advantage on every Occasion, to break in upon the Soul. It shall do nothing, attempt nothing, be in no Place, or Company, perform no Duty, private or publick, but Sin will have one Blow or other at it; it will be one Way or other solliciting for itself.

THIS is the Sum of what we shall offer on this Acting of Sin in fighting and warring against our Souls, which is so often mentioned in Scripture. And a due Consideration of it is of no small Advantage unto us, especially to bring us unto self Abasement, to teach us to walk humbly and mournfully before GOD. There are two Things that are suited to humble the Souls of Men. And they are first, A due Consideration of GOD, and then of themselves. Of GOD in his Greatness, Glory, Holiness, Power, Majesty and Authority; of ourselves in our mean, abject and sinful Condition. Now of all Things in our Condition, there is nothing so suited unto this End, as that which lies before us; namely, the vile Remainders of Enmity against GOD, which are yet in our Hearts and Natures. And it is no small Evidence of a gracious Soul, when it is willing to search itself in this Matter, and to be helped therein from a Word of Truth. When it is willing that the Word should dive into the secret Parts of the Heart, and rip open whatever of Evil and Corruption lies therein. Most Men love to hear of the Doctrine of Grace, of the Pardon of Sin, of free Love, and suppose they find Food therein; but to be breaking up the fallow Ground of their Hearts, to be enquiring after the Weeds, and Briars that grow in them, they delight not so much. Though this be no less necessary than the other. This Path is not so-beaten as that of Grace, though it be the only Way to come to a true Knowledge of Grace itself. It may be some who are wise in other Truths, may yet be so little skilled in searching their own Hearts, that they may be slow in the Perception of these Things. But this Sloth and Neglect is to be shaken off, if we have any Regard to our own Souls. It were to be wish'd, that we would all apply our Hearts

more to this Work, even to come to a true Understanding of the Nature, Power and Subtilty of this our Adversary, that our Souls may be humbled; and that,

1. IN walking with GOD. His Delight is with the Humble, those that tremble at his Word, the Mourners in *Sion*, and such are we only, when we have a due Sense of our own vile Condition. This will beget Reverence of GOD, Sense of our Distance from Him, Admiration of his Grace and Condescension, a due Valuation of Mercy.

2. IN walking with others, it lays in Provision to prevent those great Evils of judging, spiritual Unmercifulness, harsh Censuring. This will lead us to Meekness, Compassion, Readiness to forgive, to pass by Offences, even when we shall consider what is our State, as the Apostle plainly declares, *Gal. vi. 1.* The Man that understands the Evil of his own Heart, is the only fruitful and solidly believing and obedient Person. Others are fit only to delude themselves, to disquiet Families, Churches, and all Relations whatever. Let us consider our Hearts wisely, and then go and see if we can be proud of our Gifts, our Graces, our Enjoyments. Let us go then and judge, condemn, reproach others that have been tempted; we shall find a great Inconsistency in these Things.

THE third Thing assigned to this Law of Sin in its Opposition unto GOD. What is contained in this Expression, shall be declared in the ensuing Observations.

1. IT is not directly the Power of Sin that is here expressed, but its Success. But Success is the
the

the greatest Evidence of Power, and leading Captive in War is the Height of Success.

2. IT leads the Soul Captive *unto the Law of Sin*. Not to this or that particular Sin, but to the *Law of Sin*. GOD ordereth Things so, and gives out such Supplies of Grace unto Believers, that they shall not be made a Prey unto this or that particular Sin.

3. THIS leading Captive argues a Prevalency against the contrary Actings of the Will. The Will opposeth, and makes Head, as it were, against the Working of Sin. And herein consists the Lusting of the Spirit against the Flesh, *Gal. v. 17*. That is, the Contending of Grace to expell and subdue it.

1.) THAT the Power of Sin is great; and this appears in its Prevalency unto Captivity, against the Actings and Contendings of the Will for Liberty from it. Had it no Opposition made unto it, or were its Adversary weak, negligent, slothful, it were no great Evidence of its Power, that it made Captives. But its prevailing against Diligence, Activity, Watchfulness, the constant Renitency of the Will, this evinceth its Efficacy.

2.) THIS leading Captive intimates Success. Had it not Success in particular, it could not be said at all to lead Captive. Rebel it might, assail it might, but it cannot be said to lead Captive without some Successes. And there are several Degrees of the Success of Sin in the Soul. Sometimes it obtaineth the Consent of the Will, but is cast out by Grace, and proceeds no farther. Sometimes it wearies and entangles the Soul, that it turns aside, as it were, and leaves contending, which is a Success also.

THE *Fourth* and last Degree of the Opposition made by the Law of Sin to GOD, and the Law of his Will and Grace, is in its Rage and Madnes. There is Madnes in its Nature, *Eccles. ix. 3. The Heart of the Sons of Men is full of evil, and Madnes is in their Heart.* The Evil that the Heart of Man is full of by Nature, is that Indwelling Sin whereof we speak. And this is so in their Heart, that it riseth up unto Madnes. The Holy Ghost expresseth this Rage of Sin by a fit Similitude which He useth in sundry Places, as *Jer. ii. 24. Hos. viii. 9.* It maketh Men as a wild Ass; she traverseth her Ways, and snuffeth up the Wind, and runneth whither her Mind leads her. We may a little consider what lies in this Madnes and Rage of Sin.

1. FOR the Nature of it, it seems to consist in a violent, heady, Pressing unto Evil. Violence, Importunity and Pertinacy are in it. It is the Torturing of the Soul by any Sin to force its Consent. It riseth up in the Heart, is denied by the Law of Grace, and rebuked; it returns and exerts its Poison again; the Soul is startled, casts it off; it returns again with new Violence and Importunity, the Soul cries out for Help and Deliverance, looks round about to all Springs of Gospel Grace, trembles at the furious Assaults of Sin, and casts itself into the Arms of *Christ* for Deliverance. And if it be not able to take that Course, it is foiled and hurried up and down through the Mire of foolish Imaginations, corrupt and noisome Lusts; which rend and tear it, as if they would devour its whole spiritual Life and Power. This is plain Madnes and Fury. We need not seek far for Instances, we see Men mad on their Lusts every Day; and which is the worst Kind

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Kind of Madness, their Lusts do not rage so much in them, as they rage in the Pursuit of them. Are those greedy Pursuits of Things in the World, which we see some Men engaged in any Thing else but plain Madness? GOD, who searcheth the Hearts of Men, knows that the most of Things that are done with other Pretences in, the World, are nothing but the Actings of Men, mad and furious in the Pursuit of their Lusts.

2. SIN riseth not unto this Heighth ordinarily, but when it hath got a double Advantage.

(1.) THAT is, be provoked, enraged and heighten'd by some great Temptation. Though it be a Poison in itself, yet being inbred in Nature, it grows not violently outrageous, without the Contribution of some new Poison of *Satan* unto it in a suitable Temptation.

(2.) IT must be advantaged by some former Entertainment. Sin grows not to this Height at its first Assault. Had it not been suffered to make its Entrance, had there not been some Yielding in the Soul, this had not come about. The great Wisdom of the Soul in dealing with Indwelling Sin, is to put a violent Stop unto its Beginnings. Venture all on the first Die, rather than yield one Step. If through the Deceit of Sin, or the Negligence of the Soul, or its carnal Confidence, it makes any Entrance into the Soul, and finds any Entertainment, it gets Strength and Power, and insensibly ariseth to the Frame under Consideration. Thou hadst never had the Experience of the Fury of Sin, if thou hadst not been content with some of its Dalliances. Hadst thou not brought up this Servant, this Slave delicately, it would not have now presumed beyond a Son.

Now

Now when the Law of Sin, in any Particular, hath got this double Advantage, the Furtherance of a vigorous Temptation, and some Prevalency formerly obtained, whereby it is let into the Strengths of the Soul, it often riseth up to this.



C H A P. IV.

Indwelling SIN proved to be deceitful.

THE second Way whereby Indwelling Sin works, is by Fraud. It adds, Deceit unto Power. The Efficacy of that must needs be great, and is carefully to be watched against, by all such as value their Souls.

THAT Sin is deceitful, we have the express Testimony of the Holy Ghost, as *Heb. iii. 13. Take Heed that ye be not harden'd by the Deceitfulness of Sin.* Deceitful it is, take Heed of it, watch against it, or it will produce its utmost Effect in hardening the Heart against GOD. It is on the Account of Sin that the Heart is said to be *deceitful above all Things*, *Jer. xvii. 9.* Take a Man in other Things, and as *Job* speaks, *tho' he would be wise and crafty, he is like the wild Ass's Colt*, *Job xi. 12.* a poor, vain, empty, Nothing. But consider his Heart on the Account of this Law of Sin, it is crafty and deceitful above all Things. *They are wise to do Evil*, saith the Apostle, *but to do Good they know not*, *Jer. iv. 22.* To the same Purpose speaks the Apostle, *Ephes. iv. 2. The old Man is corrupt according to deceitful Lusts.* Every Lust, which is a Branch of this Law

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Law of Sin, is deceitful; and where there is Poison in every Stream, the Fountain must needs be corrupt. No particular Lust, hath any Deceit in it, but what is communicated unto it from this Fountain of all actual Lust, this Law of Sin.

HENCE are those manifold Cautions that are given us to take Heed, that we be not deceived, if we would take Heed that we do not Sin. See *Eph. v. 6. I Cor. vi. 9. I Cor. xv. 33. Gal. vi. 7. Luke xxi. 8.* From all which Testimonies we may learn the Influence that Deceit hath into Sin, and consequently the Advantage that Sin has to put forth its Power by its Deceitfulness. Where it prevails to deceive, it fails not to bring forth its Fruit.

THE Ground of this Efficacy of Sin by Deceit is taken from the Faculty of the Soul affected with it. Deceit properly affects the Mind; it is the Mind that is deceived. When Sin attempts any other Way of Entrance into the Soul, as by the Affections, the Mind retaining its right Sovereignty, is able to give Check and Controul unto it. But where the Mind is tainted, the Prevalency must be great. For the Mind or Understanding is the leading Faculty of the Soul. Hence it is, that though the Entanglement of the Affections be oft Times most troublesome, yet the Deceit of the Mind is always most dangerous; and that because of the Place that it possesseth in the Soul, as to all its Operations. Its Office is to guide, direct, choose and lead; and *if the Light that is in us be Darkness, how great is that Darkness!*

AND this will farther appear, if we consider the Nature of Deceit in general. It consists in presenting to the Mind, Things otherwise than

they are. This is the general Nature of Deceit, and it prevails many Ways. It hides what ought to be seen and considered, conceals Circumstances and Consequences, presents what is not, or Things as they are not. This is the Nature of Deceit; it is a Representation of a Matter under Disguises, hiding that which is undesirable, proposing that which indeed is not in it, that the Mind may make a false Judgment of it.

AGAIN, Deceit hath Advantage by the Way of Management, which is inseparable from it. It is always carried on by Degrees, by little and little, that the Whole of the Design be not at once discovered. *Stephen* tell us, that the *King of Egypt* dealt subtilly or deceitfully with their Kindred, *Acts* vii. 19. How he did it we may see, *Exod.* i. He did not at first fall to killing them, but says *Verse* 10. *Come let us deal wisely*; beginning to oppress them. This brings forth their Bondage, *Verse* 11. Having got this Ground to make them Slaves, he proceeds to destroy their Children, *Verse* 16. He fell not on them all at once, but by Degrees. And this may suffice to shew in general, that Sin is deceitful and the Advantages it hath thereby.

FOR the Manner and Progress of Sin in working by Deceit, we have it fully expressed, *James* i. 14. 15. *Every Man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own Lust, and enticed; then when Lust hath Conceived it bringeth forth Sin, and Sin when it is finished bringeth forth Death.* This Place declaring the Whole of what we aim at in this Matter, must be particularly insisted on.

IN the foregoing *Verse*, the Apostle manifests that Men are willing to drive the old Trade, which our first Parents at the Entrance of Sin set up with, namely,

namely, excusing themselves in their Sins, and casting the Occasion and Blame of them on others. It is not, say they, from themselves, their own Nature and Inclinations, that they have committed such Evils, but meerly from their Temptations. And if they know not where to fix the Evil of those Temptations, they will lay them on GOD Himself, rather than go without an Excuse. This Evil in the Hearts of Men, the Apostle rebuketh, *Verse 13. Let no Man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of GOD, for GOD cannot be tempted of Evil, neither tempteth He any Man.* And to shew the Justness of this Reproof, he discovers the true Causes of the Rise and Progress of Sin, manifesting that the whole Guilt of it lies upon the Sinner, and that the whole Punishment of it, if not graciously prevented, will be his Lot also.

WE may observe in the Words,

1. THE End aimed at in all the Actings of Sin, or the Tendency of it in its own Nature, and that is Death; *Sin when it is finished bringeth forth Death*; the everlasting Death of the Sinner; pretend what it will, this is the End it aims at and tends to. Hiding of Ends and Designs, is the principal Property of Deceit. This Sin doth to the utmost; other Things innumerable it pleads, but not that it aims at the Death, the everlasting Death of the Soul. And a fixed Apprehension of this End of every Sin, is a blessed Means to prevent its Beguiling.

2. THE general Way of its Acting towards that End, is by Temptation; *every Man is tempted of his own Lust.* Every Man is tempted, that is, every Man is beguiled or deceived by his own Lust, or indwelling Sin, which are the same.

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THE Degrees whereby Sin proceedeth in this Work of *Tempting* or *Deceiving*, are five.

(1.) THE first of these consist in drawing away, *every Man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own Lust.*

(2.) THE second in enticing; *and is enticed.*

(3.) THE third, in the Conception of Sin; *when Lust hath conceived*, when the Heart is enticed, then Lust conceives in it.

(4.) THE fourth is the bringing forth of Sin in its actual Accomplishment, *when Lust hath conceived it brings forth Sin.*

(5.) The fifth is, the filling up of the Measure of it, whereby the End originally designed by Lust is brought about; *Sin when it is finished, bringeth forth Death.* As naturally and necessarily bringeth forth Sin, so Sin finished, infallibly procureth eternal Death.

I SHALL principally consider the three first, wherein the main Strength of the Deceit of Sin doth lie

(1.) THE first Thing which Sin is said to do, working in a Way of Deceit, is to draw away, or to draw off. Whence a Man is said to be *drawn off*, or *drawn away*, and diverted, namely from attending to a Course of Obedience and Holiness.

THE first Thing that Sin aims at in its deceitful Working, is to draw off and divert the Mind from the Discharge of its Duty.

THERE

THERE are two Things which belong to the Mind, in that special Office which it hath about the Obedience which GOD requireth.

[1.] To keep itself and the whole Soul in such a Posture, as may render it ready to all Duties of Obedience, and watchful against all Inticements to the Conception of Sin.

[2.] IN particular, carefully to attend unto all particular ACTIONS, that they be performed as GOD requireth, for Matter, Manner, Time and Season, agreeable unto his Will, as also for the obviating all particular Tenders of Sin in Things forbidden. In these two Things consists the whole Duty of the Mind of a Believer. And from both of them doth Indwelling Sin endeavour to draw it off.

[1.] THE first of these is, the Duty of the Mind, in Reference to the general Frame and Course of the whole Soul; and hereof two Things may be considered. (1.) That it is founded in a due, constant Consideration, of ourselves, of Sin and its Vileness; of GOD, and of his Goodness. And both these doth Sin labour to draw it off from. (2.) In attending to those Duties which are suited to obviate the Working of Sin, in an especial Manner.

(1.) IT endeavours to draw it off from a due Consideration, and Sensibleness of its own Vileness, and the Danger wherewith it is attended. This in the first Place we shall instance in. A due constant Consideration of Sin in its Nature, in all its aggravating Circumstances, in its End and Tendency, especially as represented in the Blood and Cross of *Christ*, ought always to abide with us. He that walketh humbly walketh safely. This is the Design of *Peter's* Advice, 1 *Epist.* i. 17. *Pass the Time of*
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your sojourning here in Fear. After he himself had miscarried by another Frame of Mind, he gives this Advice to all Believers; it is not a servile Fear, perplexing the Soul, but such a Fear as may keep Men constantly calling upon the Father, with Reference to the final Judgment, that they may be preserved from Sin whereof they were in so great Danger, which he advises them to: *If ye call on the Father, who without Respect of Persons judgeth according to every Man's Work, pass the Time of your sojourning here in Fear.* This is the humble Frame of Soul, and how is this obtained? How is this preserved? No otherwise but by a constant deep Apprehension of the Evil, Vileness and Danger of Sin. So was it wrought, so was it kept up in the approved *Publican*: *GOD be merciful, saith he, to me a Sinner.* Sense of Sin kept him humble, and Humility made Way for his Access to a Testimony of the Pardon of Sin.

THIS therefore in the first Place, doth the Law of Sin put forth its Deceit in, namely to draw the Mind from this Frame. It secretly and insensibly insinuates lessening, excusing, extenuating Thoughts of it; or it draws it off from pondering upon it, from being conversant about it. And if after the Heart of a Man hath through the Word, Spirit and Grace of *Christ* been made tender, soft, deeply sensible of Sin, it becomes on any Account, or by any Means, to have less, fewer, or slighter, or less affecting Thoughts of it, the Mind of that Man is drawn away by the Deceitfulness of Sin.

THERE are two Ways amongst others, whereby the Law of Sin endeavours deceitfully to draw off the Mind from this Duty.

(I.) IT

(I.) IT doth it by an horrible Abuse of Gospel Grace. There is in the Gospel a Remedy provided against the whole Evil of Sin, the Filth, the Guilt of it, with all its dangerous Consequents. It is the Doctrine of the Deliverance of the Souls of Men from Sin and Death. A Discovery of the gracious Will of GOD towards Sinners by *Jesus Christ*. What now is the genuine Tendency of this Doctrine, of this Discovery of Grace? This the Apostle declares, *Titus ii. 11, 12. The Grace of GOD that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all Men, teaching us, that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live Soberly, Righteously, and Godly in this present World.* This it teacheth, this we ought to learn by it. Hence universal Holiness is called a *Conversation that becometh the Gospel*, *Phil. i. 27.* It becomes it as that which is answerable to its End, as that which it requires, and which it ought to be improved to. And accordingly it doth produce this Effect where the Word is received and preserved in a saving Light. But herein doth the Deceit of Sin interpose itself. It separates between the Doctrine of Grace, and the Use and End of it. It stays upon its Notions, and intercepts its Influences in its proper Application. From the Doctrine of the assured Pardon of Sin, it insinuates a Regardlessness of Sin. GOD in *Christ* makes the Proposition, and Satan and Sin make the Conclusion.

INDEED in Opposition to this Deceit lies much of the Wisdom of Faith, and Power of Gospel Grace. When the Mind is fully possessed with, and cast habitually and firmly into the Mould of Gospel Truth, about the full and free Forgiveness of all Sins in the Blood of *Christ*, then to be able to keep the Heart always in a deep humbling Sense of Sin, Abhorrency of it, and Self-abasement for it, is

a great Effect of Gospel Wisdom. This is the Trial and Touchstone of Gospel Light. If it keep the Heart sensible of Sin, lowly, and broken on that Account; if it Teach us to water a free Pardon with Tears, to detest forgiven Sin, to watch diligently for the Ruin of that, which yet shall never ruin us, it is Divine, from Above, of the Spirit of Grace.

HENCE it comes to pass, that sometimes we see Men walking in a bondage Frame of Spirit all their Days, low in their Light, mean in their Apprehensions of Grace, so that it is hard to discern whether covenant in their Principles they belong unto; whether they are under the Law, or under Grace, yet walk with a more conscientious Tenderneſs of Sinning, than many who are advanced into higher Degrees of Light and Knowledge than they. Not that the ſaving Light of the Gospel, is not the only Principle of the Gospel; but through the Deceitfulneſs of Sin variously abuſed to countenance the Soul in manifold Neglect of Duties, and to draw off the Mind from a due Conſideration of the Nature, Deſert, and Danger of Sin. And this is done ſeveral Ways.

[1.] THE Soul having frequent Need of Relief by Gospel Grace againſt a Senſe of the Guilt of Sin, comes at length to make it a common and ordinary Thing, and ſuch as may be ſlightly performed. Having found a good Medicine for its Wounds; it comes to apply it ſlightly, and rather ſkinneth over, than cureth its Sores. A little leſs Earneſtneſs, a little leſs Diligence ſerves every Time, until the Soul begins to ſecure itſelf of Pardon in Courſe. And this tends directly to draw off the Mind from its conſtant and univerſal Watchfulneſs againſt Sin. He whoſe Light hath made his Way of Acceſs plain
for

for the obtaining of Pardon, if he be not very watchful, is far more apt to become formal, and careless in his Work, than he who by Reason of Mists and Darknes, beats about to find his Way to the Throne of Grace. As a Man that hath often travelled a Road passeth on without Regard or Enquiry ; but he who is a Stranger unto it, observing all Turnings, and enquiring of all Passengers, secures his Journey beyond the other.

[2.] THE Deceitfulness of Sin takes Advantage from the Doctrine of Grace, by many Ways to extend the Bounds of the Soul's Liberty beyond what GOD hath assigned. Some have never thought themselves free from legal Bondage, until they have been brought into the Confines of Sensuality, and some into the Depths of it.

[3.] IN Times of Temptation this Deceitfulness of Sin, will argue expressly for Sin from Gospel Grace ; at least it will plead for these two Things:

(1.) THAT there is not Need of such a severe Contending against it: If it cannot divert the Mind wholly from attending to Temptations to oppose them, yet it will endeavour to draw them off, as to the Manner of their Attendance. They need not use that Diligence which at first the Soul apprehends to be necessary.

(2.) IT will be tendering Relief as to the Event of Sin, that it should not turn to the Destruction of the Soul, because it may be pardoned by Grace. And this is true, this is the great and only Relief of the Soul against Sin. But when it is pleaded and remembered by the Deceitfulness of Sin in Compliance with Temptation, then it is Poison ; Poison is mixed in every Drop of this Balsam, to the Dan-

ger, if not Death of the Soul. And this is the first Way whereby the Deceitfulness of Sin draws off the Mind from a due Attendance unto that Sense of its Vileness, which alone is able to keep it in that humble, self abased Frame that is acceptable with God. It makes the Mind careless, as though its Work were needless, because of the Abounding of Grace.

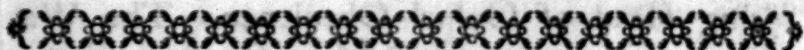
[2.] SIN takes Advantage to Work by its Deceit in this Matter of drawing off the Mind from a due Sense of it, from the State and Condition of Men in the World. I shall only give one Instance; Men in their younger Days have naturally their Affections more quick, vigorous and active. Many Things befall Men in their Lives, that take off the Edge and Keeness of them. But as Men lose in their Affections, they improve in their Understandings. Hence it is, that if what had Place formerly in their Affections, do not take Place in their Judgments, they utterly lose them, they have no more Place in their Souls. But if they are Things that come to be fixed in their Minds, they continue a high Esteem for them, and do cleave as close unto them, as they did when their Affections were more vigorous. It is thus in Things spiritual; the chief Seat of the Sensibleness of Sin, is in the Affections; as these in natural Youth, are great and large, so are they spiritually in spiritual Youth. Besides such Persons are newly come off from their Convictions, wherein they have been cut to the Heart, and so made tender. Whatever touches upon a Wound is thoroughly felt: So doth the Guilt of Sin before the Wound given by Conviction be thoroughly cured. But now when the Affections begin to decay naturally, they begin to decay also in Things spiritual. Now in these Decays, if the Soul take not Care to fix a deep Sense of Sin on the Mind and Judgment,

Judgment, thereby perpetually to affect the Heart and Affections, it will decay. And here the Deceit of the Law of Sin interposeth itself. It suffers a Sense of Sin to decay in the Affections, and diverts the Mind from entertaining a due, constant, fixed Consideration of it. And if as the Sensibleness of the Affections decay, if as they grow heavy and obtuse, great Wisdom and Grace be not used to fix a due Sense of Sin upon the Mind and Judgment, which may provoke, excite, enliven, and stir up the Affections every Day, great Decays will insue. At first, Sorrow, Trouble, Grief, Fear, affected the Mind, and would give it no Rest. If afterwards the Mind do not affect the Heart with Sorrow, the Soul will be in Danger of being hardened. And these are some of the Ways whereby the Deceit of Sin diverts the Mind from its constant Watchfulness.

THE second Part of this general Duty of the Mind, is to keep a constant, holy Consideration of God and his Grace. This evidently lies at the Spring-Head of Gospel-Obedience. The Way whereby Sin draws off the Mind from this Part of its Duty is open and known sufficiently, though not sufficiently watched against. Now this the Scripture every where declares to be the Filling of the Minds of Men with earthly Things. This it placeth in direct Opposition to that heavenly Frame, which is the Spring of Gospel-Obedience.

SEVERAL Ways there are whereby the Deceitfulness of Sin draws off the Mind in this Particular, but the Chief of them is by pressing these Things on the Mind under the Notion of Things lawful. So all those who excuse themselves in the Parable, from coming to the Marriage-Feast, did it on the Account of their being engaged in their lawful Callings. One about his Farm, another his Oxen, the Means whereby

whereby he ploughed in this World. By this Plea were the Minds of Men drawn off from that Frame of Heavenliness which is required to our Walking with GOD, and the Rules of not loving the World, or using it as if we used it not, are hereby neglected. What Wisdom, what Watchfulness, what serious frequent Examination of ourselves is required, to keep our Hearts in an heavenly Frame, in the Use and Pursuit of earthly Things. This is evident, that the Engine whereby the Deceit of Sin draws off the Mind in this Matter, is the Pretence of the Lawfulness of Things, against which very few are armed with sufficient Diligence, Wisdom, and Skill. And this is the first Attempt that Indwelling Sin makes upon the Soul by Deceit: It draws away the Mind from a diligent Attention to its Course, in a due Sense of the Evil of Sin, and a due and constant Consideration of GOD and his Grace.



CHAP. V.

*The Deceit of SIN in drawing off the
MIND from a due Attendance unto
DUTIES.*

EVERY Duty performed in the Strength of the Spirit, is contrary to the Law of Sin. But yet there are some Duties, which in their own Nature, and by GOD's Appointment, have a peculiar Influence into the weakening and subduing it. And these the Mind of a Believer ought principally in his whole Course to attend unto. And these
doth

doth Sin in its Deceit endeavour principally to draw off the Mind from. Two of these Duties are, Prayer, especially private Prayer; and Meditation. These are as the Blood and Spirits in the Veins, that have the same Life, Motion, and Use. But yet because Persons are generally at a great Loss in this Duty of Meditation; I shall give briefly two or three Rules for a right Performance of it.

1. MEDITATE of GOD with GOD; that is, when we would undertake Thoughts and Meditations of GOD, his Excellencies, his Properties, his Glory, his Majesty, his Love, his Goodness, let it be done in a Way of speaking unto GOD, in a deep Humiliation and Abasement of our Souls before Him. This will fix the Mind, and draw it forth from one Thing to another, to give Glory to GOD in a due Manner, and affect the Soul until it be brought into that holy Admiration of GOD and Delight in Him, which is acceptable unto Him. My Meaning is, that it be done in a Way of Prayer and Praise, speaking unto GOD.

2. MEDITATE on the Word in the Word; that is, in the Reading of it, consider the Sense in the particular Passages we insist upon, looking to GOD for Guidance and Direction in the Discovery of His Will therein, and then Labour to have our Hearts affected with it.

3. WHAT we come short of in Evenness and Constancy in these Things, let it be made up in Frequency. Some are discouraged because their Minds do not regularly supply them with Thoughts to carry on their Meditations. Let this be supplied by frequent Returns of the Mind to the Subject proposed to be meditated upon, whereby new Senses will still be supplied.

THESE

THESE Duties, I say, amongst others, do make an especial Opposition to the very Being and Life of Indwelling Sin. They are perpetually designing its utter Ruin. I shall in the Pursuit of our present Purpose,

(1.) SHEW the Suitableness and Usefulness of these Duties, unto the Ruining of Sin.

(2.) SHEW the Means whereby the Deceitfulness of Sin endeavours to draw off the Mind from a due Attendance unto them.

(1.) FOR the first observe,

(1.) THAT it is the proper Work of the Soul in these Duties, to consider all the secret Workings and Actings of Sin, what Advantages it hath got, what Temptations it is in Conjunction withal, what Harm it hath already done, and what it is yet farther ready to do. I speak of that Prayer which is attended with a due Consideration of all the Wants, Straits, and Emergencies of the Soul. Without this, Prayer is not Prayer; that is, whatever Shew it hath, it is no Way useful, either to the Glory of GOD, or the Good of Men. A Cloud it is without Water, driven by the Wind of the Breath of Men. Nor was there ever any more present and effectual Poison for Souls found out, than the Binding them to a constant Form of Words in their Prayers, which themselves do not understand. But in this Kind of Prayer which we insist on, the Spirit of GOD falls in to give his Assistance, and that in this very Matter of discovering the most secret Workings of Sin. *Rom. viii. 26. We know not what to pray for as we ought, but He helps our Infirmities*; He discovers our Wants to us, and wherein

wherein chiefly we stand in Need of Relief. And we find it by daily Experience, that in Prayer, Believers are led into such Discoveries of the secret Work of Sin in their Hearts, as no Considerations could ever have led them into. The Spirit in this Duty is as the Candle of the LORD to the Soul, enabling it to search all the inward Parts of the Belly. It gives a holy spiritual Light into the Mind, enabling it to search the deep and dark Recesses of the Heart, to find out the subtle and deceitful Machinations and Imaginations of Sin therein. Whatever Notion there be of it, whatever Power and Prevalency in it, it is laid Hand on, apprehended, brought into the Presence of GOD, judged, condemned. And what can possibly be more effectual for its Destruction? For together with its Discovery, Application is made to that Relief which in *Jesus Christ* is provided against it. Hence it is the Duty of the Mind, *to Watch unto Prayer*, 1 *Pet.* iv. 7. To attend diligently to the Estate of our Souls, and to deal fervently and effectually with GOD about it. The like also may be said of Meditation, wisely managed.

(2.) IN this Duty there is wrought upon the Heart a deep, full Sense of the Vileness of Sin, with a constant renewed Detestation of it, which, if any Thing, undoubtedly tends to its Ruin. This is one Design of Prayer, one End of the Soul in it, namely to draw forth Sin, to present it unto itself in its Vileness and aggravating Circumstances, that it may be loathed, abhorred, and cast away as a filthy Thing; as *Isa.* xxx. 22. He that pleads with GOD for Sin's Remission, pleads also with his own Heart for its Detestation, *Hos.* xiv. 3. Herein also Sin is judged in the Name of GOD; for the Soul in its Confession subscribes to GOD's Detestation of it. There is indeed a Course of these Duties, which convinced Persons

sons give up themselves to, as a meer Covert to their Lust; they cannot Sin quietly, unless they perform Duty constantly. But that Prayer we speak of is a Thing of another Nature, a Thing that will allow no Composition with Sin, much less will serve the Ends of the Deceit of it, as the other formal Prayer doth. It will not be bribed into a secret Compliance with any of the Enemies of GOD, or the Soul, no not for a Moment. And hence it is that often in this Duty, the Heart is raised to the most effectual Sense of Sin, and Detestation of it, that the Soul ever obtains in its whole Course of Obedience.

(3.) THIS is the Way appointed and blessed of GOD to obtain Strength and Power against Sin, *Jam. i. 5.* Doth any Man lack, let him ask of GOD. Prayer is the Way of obtaining from GOD by *Christ* a Supply of all our Wants, Assistance against all Opposition, especially that which is made against us by Sin. It is that wherein we call, and upon which the LORD JESUS comes in to our Succour, with a suitable Help in a Time of Need, *Heb. ii. 17.*

(4. FAITH in Prayer countermines all the Workings of the Deceit of Sin; because the Soul doth therein constantly engage to GOD to oppose all Sin whatsoever. *Psal. cxix. cvi. I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous Judgments.* This is the Language of every gracious Soul in its Addresses to GOD: The inmost Parts thereof engage themselves to GOD to cleave to him in all Things, and to oppose Sin in all Things. He that cannot do this, cannot pray. To pray with any other Frame, is to flatter GOD with our Lips, which He abhorreth.

AND

AND this exceedingly helps a Believer in pursuing Sin to its Ruin. For,

[1.] IF there be any secret Lust that lies lurking in the Heart, he will find it either rising up against this Engagement, or using its Artifices to secure itself from it. And hereby it is discovered; and the Conviction of the Heart concerning its Evil furthered and strengthened. Sin makes the most certain discovery of itself, and never more evidently than when it is most severely pursued.

[2.] IF any Sin be prevalent in the Soul, it will weaken it, and take it off from the Universality of this Engagement unto GOD, it will breed a Slightness in it. Now when this is observed, it will exceedingly awaken a gracious Soul, and stir it up to look about. As a causeless Weariness and Indisposition of the Body, is looked on as the Sign of an approaching Fever, or some dangerous Distemper, which stirs up Men to use a timely and vigorous Prevention, that they be not seized upon by it; so is it in this Case. When the Soul of a Believer finds an Indisposition to make fervent, sincere Engagements of universal Holiness to GOD, it knows that there is some prevalent Distemper in it, finds the Place of it, and sets itself against it.

[3.] WHILST the Soul can thus constantly engage itself to GOD, it is certain that Sin can rise unto no ruinous Prevalency. Yea, it is a Conquest over Sin, a most considerable Conquest, when the Soul doth fully and clearly, without any secret Reserve, come off with Alacrity and Resolution in such an Engagement.

[4.] IF the Heart be not deceived by cursed Hypocrisy, this Engagement to GOD will greatly influence

fluence it to a peculiar Diligence and Watchfulness against all Sin. It is otherwise in a Sense and Conscience of Engagements against Sin made to God, make it universally watchful against all its Motions and Operations. On these, and sundry other Accounts, doth Faith in this Duty exert itself to the Weakening of the Power of Sin.

If then the Mind be diligent to preserve the Soul from the Efficacy of Sin, it will carefully attend to this Duty. Here therefore,

(2.) SIN puts forth its Deceit in its own Defence; it labours to divert and draw off the Mind. And there are, among others, three Engines, whereby it attempts the Accomplishment of its Design.

(1.) IT makes Advantage of its Weariness to the Flesh. There is an Averſation, as hath been declared in the Law of Sin to all immediate Communion with God. And this the Deceitfulness of Sin makes Use of, to draw the Heart by insensible Degrees from a constant Attendance unto it. It puts in for the Relief of the weak and weary Flesh. If the Mind be not diligently watchful to prevent Insinuations from hence, if it dwell not constantly on those Considerations which evidence an Attendance unto this Duty, to be indispensable, if it stir not up the Principle of Grace in the Heart to retain its Rule and Sovereignty, and not to be dallied with by foolish Pretences, it will be drawn off.

(2.) THE Deceitfulness of Sin makes Use of corrupt Reasonings taken from the pressing Occasions of Life. Should we attend strictly to all Duties in this Kind, we should neglect our principal Occasions, and be useless to ourselves and the World. And on this general Account, particular Business disposes

sefs particular Duties from their due Place. Men have not Leisure to glorify GOD and save their own Souls. It is certain that GOD gives us Time enough for all that He requires of us in any Kind in this World. No Duties need to juggle one another; but it is more tolerable that our Duties of Holiness, should intrench on the Duties of our Callings, than on the contrary; and yet neither doth GOD require this at our Hands in an ordinary Course. How little then will He bear with that which is so much worse. Yet thus are the Souls of Men beguiled. By several Degrees they are at length driven from their Duty.

(3.) It deals with the Mind to draw it off from Attendance unto this Duty by a Compensation to be made by other Duties. As *Saul* thought to compensate his Disobedience by Sacrifice. *May not the same Duty performd in Publick, or in the Family suffice?* And if the Soul be so foolish as not to answer, *Those Things ought to be done, and this not to be left undone,* it may be ensnared and deceived.

(4.) I MAY add here that which hath Place in all the Workings of Sin by Deceit, namely, its feeding the Soul with Promises and Purposes of a more diligent Attendance on this Duty when Occasions will permit. By this Means it brings the Soul to say to Convictions of Duty, as *Felix* did to *Paul*, *Go thy Way for this Time, when I have a convenient Season, I will call for thee.* And by this Means often the present Season, which alone is ours, is lost irrecoverably.

THESE are some of the Ways whereby the Deceit of Sin endeavours to draw off the Mind from its due Attendance on this Duty.

THIS will instruct us where lies the Beginning of our Declensions and Failings in the Ways of GOD, and that either as to our general Course, or as to our Attendance on especial Duties. And this is of great Importance. GOD doth not look at what Duties we perform, as to their Number and Tale, but whether we do them with that Intention of Mind and Spirit which He requireth. Many Men perform Duties in a Course, and do not, as it were, so much as think of them. Their Minds are filled with other Things, only Duty takes up so much of their Time. This is but an Endeavour to mock GOD, and deceive their own Souls. Would you therefore take the true Measure of yourselves: Consider how it is with you as to your Minds. Consider whether, by any of the Deceits mentioned, you have not been diverted and drawn away; and if there be any Decays upon you in any Kind, you will find that there hath been the Beginning of them. By one Way or other your Minds have been made heedless, being beguiled and drawn off from their Duty. And this Discovery will direct the Soul to a suitable Way for its Recovery, which will never be effected by multiplying of particular Duties, but by restoring the Mind.

THERE remains the Consideration of the Charge of the Mind as to particular Duties and Sins. And in the Consideration of it, we shall

1. SHEW what is required in Reference to particular Duties.

2. DECLARE the Way of the Working of the Deceit of Sin to draw it off from its Attendance thereto. The like also shall be done with Respect to particular Sins.

I. WHAT

I. WHAT is required in Reference to particular Duties?

(1.) FOR the right Performance of any Duty, it is not enough that the Thing be performed, but that it be universally fitted to the Rule of it. Herein lies the great Duty of the Mind, namely, to attend to the Rule of Duties, and to take Care that all be ordered thereby. Our Progress in Obedience, is our Edification or Building. Now it is but a little Furtherance to a Building, that a Man bring Wood and Stones, and heap them up together. They must be hewed and squared, and fitted by Line and Rule, if we intend to build. Nor is it to our Edification in Faith and Obedience, that we multiply Duties, if we heap them one upon another, not according to Rule. That they be so is the great Duty of the Mind, and which with all Diligence it is to attend to, *Ephes. v. 15. Walk circumspectly, exactly, accurately, that is, diligently in all Things, take Heed to the Rule of what you do.*

(2.) THERE are some special Things which the Rule directs, that the Mind is to attend in every Duty. As,

[1.] THAT as to the Matter of it, it be full and compleat. When Men will give Alms, or perform other Services, but not the Proportion that the Rule requireth, and which the Mind by diligent Attention to it might discover, the whole Duty is vitiated.

[2.] As to the Principle of it, that it be done in Faith, by actual Derivation of Strength from *Christ*, without whom *we can do nothing*. It is not enough that the Person be a Believer, but also that Faith be peculiarly acted in every Duty. For our whole

whole Obedience is the *Obedience of Faith*, Rom. i. 5. that is, which the Doctrine of Faith requireth, and which the Grace of Faith bringeth forth. This therefore ought a Believer diligently to attend to, namely, that every Thing he doth to GOD, be done in the Strength of *Christ*; which wherein it consisteth ought diligently to be enquired into by all who intend to walk with GOD.

[3.] THE Manner of the Performance of every Duty is to be regarded.

Now there are two Things in the Manner of the Performance of any Duty which a Believer ought to attend to.

1.) THAT it be done in the Way GOD hath prescribed with respect to the outward Performance. And this is especially to be regarded in Duties of the Worship of GOD; the Matter and outward Manner whereof both fall under his Command.

2.) THE Affections in Duties belong to the Performance of them in the inward Manner. The Commands of GOD for Attendance hereto are innumerable, and the Want hereof renders every Duty an Abomination to Him. A Sacrifice without an Heart, without Salt, without Fire, of what Value is it? No more are Duties without spiritual Affections. And herein is the Mind to keep the Charge of GOD; to see that the Heart be tendered to Him. And we find also that GOD requireth especial Affections to accompany special Duties. *He that gives with Chearfulness*; which if they are not attended unto, the Whole is lost.

[4.] THE Mind is to attend to the Ends of Duties; and therein principally the Glory of GOD
in

in *Christ*. Several other Ends will Sin impose upon our Duties: Especially two it will press hard upon us: *First*, Satisfaction of our Convictions and Consciences. *Secondly*, The Praise of Men. For Self-Righteousness and Ostentation, are the main Ends of Men that are fallen from GOD, in all moral Duties. In their Sins they endeavour to satisfy their Lusts, in their Duties, their Conviction, and Pride. These the Mind of a Believer is diligently to watch against, and to keep up in all a single Eye to the Glory of GOD, as that which answers the great Rule of all our Obedience; *Whatever you do, do it all to the Glory of GOD*. Here then lies no small Part of the Deceit of Sin. Namely, to draw the Mind off from this Watch, to bring an Inadvertency upon it, that it shall not in these Things keep the Watch and Charge of the LORD. And if it can do so, and thereby strip our Duties of all their Excellencies, it will not much trouble us about the Duties themselves. And this it attempts several Ways.

(1. BY persuading the Mind to content itself with Generals, and not attend to Things in particular Instances. For Example; It would persuade the Soul to rest satisfied in a general Aim of doing Things to the Glory of GOD, without considering how every particular Duty may have that Tendency. If a Man be travelling, it is not only required of him, that he bend his Course that Way, but if he attend not unto every Turning, he may never come to his Journey's End. And if we suppose that in general we aim at the Glory of GOD, yet if we attend not to it distinctly upon every Duty, we shall never attain the End. And he who satisfies himself with this general Purpose, without acting in every especial Duty, will not long retain that Purpose neither.

(2. IT

(2. IT draws off the Mind from these Duties, by insinuating a secret Contentment from the Duty itself performed, as to the Matter of it. This is a fair Discharge of a natural Conscience. If the Duty be perform'd, though as to the Manner of its Performance it came short in all Things of the Rule, Conscience and Conviction will be satisfied. This the Deceitfulness of Sin endeavours to draw the Mind to, namely, to take up in the Performance of the Duty itself. Pray thou oughtest, and thou hast prayed, give Alms thou oughtest, and thou hast given Alms; go on to do the like. If it prevail herein, the Mind is discharg'd from farther Attendance and Watching unto Duty, which leaves the Soul on the Borders of many Evils. For,

(3. HENCE Customariness in all Duties will quickly ensue, which is the Height of Sin drawing off the Mind from Duty. For Mens Minds may be drawn from all Duties, in the Midst of the most abundant Performance of them. What is done with such a Frame, is not done to God. And this is the great Reason why Professors thrive so little under the Performance of a Multitude of Duties. They attend not to them in a due Manner, their Minds being drawn off from their Watch, and so they have little or no Communion with God in them, which is the End whereto they are designed.

2. As it is in Respect of Duties, so also it is in Respect of Sins. There are sundry Things in every Sin, that the Mind of a Believer is obliged to attend diligently to, for the Preservation of the Soul from it. Things they are which God hath appointed and sanctified, to give effectual Rebukes to the whole Working of the Law of Sin, and

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and such as in the Law of Grace, under which we are, are exceedingly suited and fitted to that Purpose. And these the Deceit of Sin endeavours by all Means to draw off the Mind from a due Consideration of, and Attendance unto.

SOME few of them we shall a little reflect upon.

(1.) The first is the Sovereignty of GOD, the great Law-giver, by whom it is forbidden. This *Joseph* fixed on in his great Temptation, *Gen. xxxix. 9. How can I do this great Wickedness, and sin against GOD?* There was in it a great Evil, a great Ingratitude against Man, which he pleads also and insists upon, *ver. 8, 9.* but that which fixed his Heart against it was, that it was Sin against GOD, by whom it was severely forbidden.

(2.) THE Deceit of Sin, the Punishment appointed to it, is another Thing that the Mind ought actually to attend to. And the Diversions from this have been an Inlet into all Manner of Abominations. *Job* professeth another Frame in himself, *Chap. xxxi. 23. Destruction from GOD was a Terror unto me, and by Reason of his Highness I could not endure.* So the Apostle directs Believers always to consider what a *fearful Thing it is to fall into the Hands of the living GOD*, *Heb. x. 31.* And both these Considerations, even the Sovereignty of GOD, and the Punishment of Sin, are put together by our Saviour, *Matt. x. 28. Fear not them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul; but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell.*

(3.) THE

286 *The Nature and Power of*

(3.) THE Consideration of all the Love and Kindness of GOD, against whom every Sin is committed, is another Thing that the Mind ought diligently to attend to. And this is a prevailing Consideration, if rightly managed. If there be any spiritual Ingenuity in the Soul, whilst the Mind is attentive to this Consideration, there can be no prevailing Attempt made upon it by the Power of Sin.

Now there are two Parts of this Consideration,

I.) THAT which is general in it, which is common unto all Believers, 1 *John* iii. 1, 2, 3. *Behold what Manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of GOD; therefore the World knoweth us not because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the Sons of GOD, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every Man that hath this Hope, purifieth himself even as He is pure.* Consider, saith he, the Love of GOD, and the Privileges that we enjoy by it: *Behold what Manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of GOD!* Such Love it is, and such are the Fruits of it, that the World knoweth nothing of the blessed Condition which we enjoy: *The World knoweth us not.* Nay, it is such Love, and so unspeakably glorious are the Effects of it, that we ourselves are not able to comprehend them. What Use then ought we to make of this Contemplation? Why, saith he, *Every Man that hath this Hope purifieth himself.* Every Man, who being made a Partaker of this Love, and an Hope of the full Enjoyment of the Fruits of it, of being
made

made like to GOD in Glory, purifieth himself, that is, in an Abstinence from all and every Sin.

2.) IT is to be considered as to such peculiar Mercies and Fruits of Love, as every one's Soul hath been made Partaker of. There is no Believer, but besides the Love which he hath in common with all his Brethren, hath also in the Lot of his Inheritance, some Inclosures, some especial Mercies. He hath some Joy which no Stranger intermeddleth with. Particular Applications of Love and Mercy to his Soul. Now these are all Provisions laid in by GOD, that they may be borne in Mind against an Hour of Temptation. This then is another Thing, that it is our Duty to attend to, and to oppose effectually to every Attempt by the Law of Sin.

(4.) THE Considerations that arise from the Blood and Mediation of *Christ*, are of the same Importance. So the Apostle declares, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. *For the Love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.* There is a constraining Efficacy in this Consideration, it is great, forcible, effectual, if duly attended to.

(5.) Now herein lies the Duty of the Mind, in Reference to particular Sins and Temptations. It is diligently and carefully to attend to these Things, to dwell constantly upon the Consideration of them, to have them in continual Readiness to oppose to all the Lustings, Actings, Warrings, Attempts, and Rage of Sin.

IN Reference hereto doth Sin in an especial Manner exercise its Deceit. It labours by all Means to draw off the Mind from its due Attendance to these Things; to deprive the Soul of this great Antidote against its Poison. It endeavours to cause the Soul to satisfy itself with general undigested Notions about Sin, that it may have nothing in particular to betake itself to, against its Temptations.

AND the Ways whereby it doth this may be also briefly considered.

(1. IT is from the Deceit of Sin that the Mind is spiritually slothful, whereby it becomes negligent to this Duty. The principal Discharge of its Trust in this Matter is expressed by Watching, which is the great Caution that the LORD *Jesus* gave his Disciples, in Reference to all their Dangers from Sin and *Satan*, *Mark* xiv. 37. *I say unto all, Watch.* That is, use your utmost Diligence and Circumspection, that you be not surprised and entangled with Temptations. It is called also, *Consideration*; *consider your Ways*; *consider your latter End.* Now that which is contrary to these indispensable Conditions of our Preservation, is spiritual Slothfulness, as the Apostle declares, *Heb.* vi. 11, 12. *And we desire that every one of you do shew the same Diligence to the full Assurance of Hope unto the End, that you be not slothful.* If we shew not Diligence, we are slothful, and in Danger of coming short of the Promises. Now this Sloth consists in three Things:

[1. INADVERTENCY. It doth not set itself to consider its special Concernments. The Apostle persuading the *Hebrews* with all Earnestness to attend diligently, to consider carefully that they may

may not be harden'd by the Deceitfulness of Sin, gives this Reason of their Danger, that *they were dull of Hearing*, Chap. v. 11. That is, that they were slothful, and did not attend to the Things of their Duty. A secret Regardlessness is apt to creep into the Soul, and it doth not set itself to a diligent Marking how Things go with it.

2.] AN Unwillingness to be stirred up to its Duty, *Prov. xix. 24. The slothful Man hideth his Hand in his Bosom, and will not bring it to his Mouth again.* There is an Unwillingness in Sloth to take any Notice of Warnings, Calls, or Stirrings up by the Word, Spirit, Judgments. And this is an Evidence that the Mind is made slothful by the Deceit of Sin, when especial Calls and Warnings, whether in a suitable Word, or a pressing Judgment, cannot prevail with it to pull its Hand out of its Bosom..

3.] WEAK and ineffectual Attempts to recover itself to its Duty, *Prov. xxvi. 14. As the Door turneth itself upon its Hinges, so doth the slothful Man upon his Bed.* In the Turning of a Door upon its Hinges, there is some Motion, but no Progress. It moves up and down, but it is still in the Place that it was. So it is with the spiritually slothful Man. He makes some Motions or faint Endeavours towards a Discharge of his Duty, but goes not on. There where he was one Day, there he is the next; yea, there where he was one Year, he gets no Ground by them, but is always beginning and never finishing his Work.

4.] HEARTLESTNESS upon the Apprehensions of Difficulties and Discouragements, *Prov. xxii. 13. The slothful Man saith there is a Lyon in the Way.* Every Difficulty deters him from Duty.

He thinks it impossible for him to attain to that Exactness and Perfection which he is to press after; and therefore contents himself in his old Negligence, rather than run the Hazard of an universal Circumspection. Now if the Deceit of Sin hath once drawn away the Mind into this Frame, it lays it open to every Temptation.

(2. IT draws away the Mind from its Watch in Reference to Reprisals. It falls in with some urging Temptation, and surpriseth the Mind into Thoughts quite of another Nature than those it ought to insist upon. And this indeed is the common Way of Deceit of Sin, as to particular Evils. It lays Hold on the Mind suddenly with Thoughtfulness about the present Sin, so that either it recovers not itself at all, or if any Thoughts be suggested, the Mind is so prepossessed, that they make no Impression on the Soul. Here therefore lies our Wisdom, in rejecting the very first Motions of Sin, because by Parlies with them the Mind may be drawn off from attending to its Preservatives, and so the whole rush into Evil.

(3. IT draws away the Mind by Frequency and long Continuance of its Sollicitations, making at last a Conquest of it. And this happens not without an open Neglect of the Soul, a Want of Stirring up itself to give an effectual Rebuke by the Grace of *Christ* to Sin, which would have prevented its Prevalency.

THE whole Effect of this Working of the Deceitfulness of Sin, may be reduced to these three Heads:

1.] THE Remission of an universally watchful Frame of Spirit to every Duty, and against all, even the most secret Actings of Sin.

2.] THE Omission of peculiar attending to such Duties as have an especial Respect to the Ruin of the whole Law of Sin.

3.] SPIRITUAL Sloth, as to a diligent Regard to all Duties and Sins. When these three Things are brought about, or so far as they are so, so far a Man is drawn off by his own Lust, or the Deceit of Sin.



C H A P. VI.

The Working of SIN by Deceit to entangle the Affections.

THE second Thing in the Words of the Apostle ascribed unto the deceitful Working of Sin, is its enticing. A Man is drawn away and enticed. And this seems particularly to respect the Affections, as drawing away doth the Mind. The Mind is drawn away from Duty, and the Affections are enticed into Sin. From the Prevalency hereof a Man is said to be enticed, or *entangled as with a Bait*; so the Word imports. For there is an Allusion in it unto the Bait wherewith a Fish is taken on the Hook which holds him to his Destruction.

CONCERNING this Effect of the Deceit of Sin, we shall briefly shew two Things:

1. WHAT it is to be enticed, or entangled with the Bait of Sin, to have the Affections tainted with an Inclination thereunto; and when they are so.

2. WHAT Course Sin takes, and what Way it proceedeth in, thus to entice, ensnare, or entangle the Soul.

I. FOR the first.

(1.) THE Affections are entangled when they stir up frequent Imaginations about the Object which this Deceit of Sin enticeth to. When Sin prevails, and the Affections are gone after it, it fills the Imagination with it, possessing it with Images of it continually. Such Persons devise Iniquity, and work Evil on their Beds, which they also practise when they are able. As in Particular, St. Peter tells us, That they *have Eyes full of an Adulteress, and they cannot cease from Sin*, 2 Pet. ii. 14. That is, their Imaginations are possessed with a continual Representation of the Object of their Lusts. And it is so in Part where the Affections are in Part entangled with Sin, and begin to turn aside to it. John tells us, That the Things that are in the World, are the *Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life*, 1 John ii. 14. The Lust of the Eyes is that which by them is conveyed unto the Soul. Now it is not the bodily Sense of seeing, but the fixing of the Imagination from that Sense on such Things that are intended. And this is called the Eyes, because thereby Things are constantly represented unto the Mind and Soul, as outward Objects are unto the inward Sense

Sense by the Eyes. And oftentimes the Outward Sight of the Eyes is the Occasion of these Imaginations. So *Achan* declares how Sin prevailed with him, *Josh. vii. 21.* first he saw the Wedge of Gold, and *babylonish* Garment, and then he coveted them. He rolled them, the Pleasures, the Profit of them, in his Imagination, and then fixed his Heart upon the obtaining of them. Now the Heart may have a Detestation of Sin; but yet if a Man find that the Imagination is frequently solicited by it, and exercised about it, such a one may know that his Affections are secretly enticed and entangled.

(2.) THIS entanglement is heightened, when the Imagination can prevail with the Mind to lodge vain Thoughts in it, with secret Delight. An abiding Thought with Delight, towards forbidden Objects is in all Cases actually sinful. And yet, this may be, when the Consent of the Will is not obtained; when the Soul would not do the Thing, which yet Thoughts begin to lodge in the Mind about. This Lodging of vain Thoughts in the Heart, the Prophet complains of as a Thing greatly sinful, and to be abhorred, *Jer. iv. 14.* All these Thoughts are Messengers that carry Sin to and fro between the Imagination and the Affections, and still increase it, enflaming the Imagination, and more and more entangling the Affections. *Achan* thinks upon the golden Wedge, this makes him like it, and love it; by loving it, his Thoughts are infected, and return to the Imagination of its Worth, and goodly Shew, and so by little and little the Soul is enflamed to Sin. And here if the Will parts with its Sovereignty, Sin is actually conceived.

(3.) READINESS to attend to Extenuations of Sin, or the Reliefs that are tendered against Sin
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when committed, manifest the Affections to be entangled with it. We have shewed, it is a great Part of the Deceit of Sin, to tender lessening and extenuating Thoughts of Sin. Is it not a little one? Or there is Mercy provided, or it shall be in due Time relinquished, is its Language in a deceived Heart. Now when there is a Readiness in the Soul to hearken to such Insinuations arising, it is an Evidence that the Affections are enticed. When the Soul is willing to be tempted, to be courted by Sin, to hearken to its Sollicitations, it hath lost of its conjugal Affections unto *Christ*. This is *looking on the Wine when it is red, when it giveth its Colour in the Cup, when it moveth itself aright*. Prov. xxiii. 21. A pleasing Contemplation on the Invitations of Sin, whose End the wise Man gives us, ver. 32. When the Deceit of Sin hath prevailed thus far on any Person, then he is enticed or entangled; the Will is not yet come to the actual Conception of the Sin; but the whole Soul is near thereto.

2. OUR next Enquiry is, how the Deceit of Sin proceeds and entangles the Affections; and two or three of its Baits are manifest.

(1.) IT makes use of its proper Prevalency upon the Mind, in drawing it off from its Watch and Circumspection. Says the wise Man, *Prov. i. 17. Surely in vain is the Net spread in the Sight of any Bird*; or before the Eyes of every Thing that hath a Wing, as in the Original. If it hath Eyes open to discern the Snare, and a Wing to carry it away, it will not be caught. And in vain shall the Deceit of Sin spread its Snares for the Soul, whilst the Eyes of the Mind are intent upon what it doth, and so stir up the Wings of its Will and Affections to carry it away. But if the Eyes be put out, or diverted,

ed, the Wings are of little Use. And therefore this is one of the Ways which is used by them who take Birds in their Nets, they have false Lights, or Shews of Things to divert the Sight of their Prey; and when that is done, they take the Season to cast their Nets upon them. So doth the Deceit of Sin, it first diverts the Mind by false Reasonings, and then casts its Net upon the Affections.

(2.) TAKING Advantage of such Seasons, it proposeth Sin as desirable, as exceeding satisfactory. It gilds over the Object by a thousand Pretences. This is the laying a Bait, which the Apostle alludes unto. A Bait is somewhat suitable, that is proposed to the hungry Creature for its Satisfaction, and it is by all Artifices rendered desirable and suitable. Thus is Sin presented by the Help of the Imagination to the Soul; that is, sinful Objects, which the Affections cleave to. The Apostle tells us, that there are Pleasures of Sin, *Heb. xi. 35.* which unless they are despised, as they were by *Moses*, there is no escaping Sin itself. Now this Pleasure of Sin consisteth in its Suitableness to give Satisfaction to the Flesh, to Lust, to corrupt Affections. Hence is that Caution, *Rom. xiii. 14.* *Make no Provision for the Flesh to fulfill the Lust thereof.* That is, do not suffer your Minds, Thoughts or Affections to fix upon sinful Objects, suited to give Satisfaction to the Lusts of the Flesh, to nourish and cherish them. To which Purpose he speaks again, *Gal. v. 16.* *Fulfill ye not the Lusts of the Flesh.* Bring not the Pleasures of Sin to give them Satisfaction. When Men are under the Power of Sin, they are said to *fulfill the Desires of the Flesh and of the Mind*, *Eph. ii. 3.* Thus therefore the Deceit of Sin endeavours to entangle the Affections, by proposing to them thro' the Assistance of the Imagination that Suitableness which is in it to the Satisfaction
of

of its corrupt Lusts, now set at some Liberty by the Inadvertency of the Mind. It presents its Wine as Sparkling in the Cup, the Beauty of the Adulteress, the Riches of the World to sensual and covetous Persons, and somewhat in the like Kind, in some Degrees to Believers themselves. When therefore, I say, Sin would entangle the Soul, it prevails with the Imagination to sollicit the Heart, by representing this false painted Beauty, or pretended Satisfactoriness of Sin: And then if *Satan* with any peculiar Temptation fall into its Assistance, it oftentimes inflames all the Affections, and puts the whole Soul into disorder.

(3.) IT hides the Danger that attends Sin, it covers it as the Hook is covered with the Bait, or the Net spread over with Meat for the Fowl to be taken. It is not indeed possible that Sin should utterly deprive the Soul of the Knowledge of the Danger of it. It cannot dispossess it of its Persuasion that the Wages of Sin is Death; and that it is the Judgment of GOD, that they that commit Sin are worthy of Death. But this it will do, it will so take up the Mind and Affections with the Baits and Desireableness of Sin, that it shall divert them from an actual Contemplation of the Danger of it. What *Satan* did in and by his first Temptation, that Sin doth ever since. At first *Eve* guards herself, with calling to Mind the Danger of Sin; if we eat, or touch it, we shall die, *Gen. iii. 13.* But so soon as *Satan* had filled her Mind with the Beauty and Usefulness of the Fruit to make one wise, how quickly did she lay aside her practical prevalent Consideration of the Danger of Eating it, the Curse due unto it; or else relieves herself with a vain Hope and Pretence that it should not be, because the Serpent told her so. Now Sin when it presseth upon the Soul to this Purpose, will use a thousand Wiles to hide

hide from it the Terroure of the LORD, the End of Transgressions, and especially of that peculiar Folly which it sollicit the Mind unto. Hopes of Pardon shall be used to hide it, and future Repentance shall hide it, and present Importunity of Lust shall hide it, Occasions and Importunities shall hide it, Surprizals shall hide it, Extenuation of Sin shall hide it, ballancing of Duties against it shall hide it, fixing the Imagination on present Objects shall hide it, desperate Resolutions to venture the Uttermost for the Enjoyment of Lust in its Pleasures and Profits, shall hide it. A thousand Wiles it hath which cannot be recounted.

(4.) HAVING prevailed thus far, gilding over the Pleasures of Sin, hiding its End and Demerit, it proceeds to raise perverse Reasonings in the Mind, to fix it upon the Sin proposed, that it may be conceived and brought forth, the Affections being already prevailed upon.

HERE we may stay a little, to give some few Directions for the obviating the Mischief of this Deceitfulness of Sin. Would we not be enticed or entangled, would we not be disposed to the Conception of Sin, would we be turned out of the Road which goes down to Death; let us take Heed of our Affections, which are of so great Concern in the whole Course of our Obedience, that they are commonly in the Scripture called by the Name of the Heart, as the principal Thing which GOD requires in our Walking before Him. And this is not slightly to be attended unto. *Prov. iv. 23.* saith the wise Man, *Keep thy Heart with all Diligence,* or, as in the Original *above or before all Keepings;* before every Watch, keep thy Heart. You have many Keepings that you Watch unto; you Watch to keep your Lives, to keep your Estates, to keep your

your Reputations, to keep up your Families; but, saith he, above all these Keepings, prefer that, attend to that of the Heart, of your Affections, that they be not entangled with Sin; there is no Safety without it. Save all other Things and lose the Heart, and all is lost, lost to all Eternity.

You will say then, what shall we do, or how shall we observe this Duty?

[I.] KEEP your Affections as to their Object, and that,

I.) IN general. This Advice the Apostle gives in this very Case, *Coloss. iii.* his Advice in the Beginning of that Chapter is to direct us to the Mortification of Sin, which he expressly engageth in, *ver. v.* *Mortify therefore your Members which are on the Earth.* Prevent the Working and Deceit of Sin which wars in your Members. To prepare us, to enable us hereunto, he gives us that great Direction, *ver. 2.* *Set your Affections on Things above, not on Things of the Earth.* Fix your Affections upon heavenly Things, this will enable you to mortify Sin: Fill them with the Things that are above, let them be exercised with them. They are above, blessed and suitable Objects, meet for, and answering to our Affections, GOD Himself, in his Beauty and Glory; the LORD *Jesus Christ*, who is altogether lovely, the chiefest of ten Thousand; Grace and Glory, the Mysteries revealed in the Gospel, the Blessedness promised thereby. Were our Affections filled, and possessed with these Things, as it is our Duty that they should be, it is our Happiness when they are; what Access could Sin, with its painted Pleasures, its envenomed Baits, have to our Souls? How should we loath all its Proposals, and say unto them, Get ye hence

as an abominable Thing? For what are the Pleasures of Sin, in Comparison of the exceeding Recompence of Reward which is proposed unto us?

2.) As to the Object of your Affections in an especial Manner; let it be the Cross of *Christ*, which hath an exceeding Efficacy towards the Disappointment of the whole Work of indwelling Sin, *Gal. vi. 14.* GOD forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our LORD *Jesus*, whereby the World is crucified unto me, and I unto the World. The Cross of *Christ* he gloried and rejoiced in; this his Heart was set upon, and these were the Effects of it; it crucified the World unto him, made it a dead and undesirable Thing. The Baits and Pleasures of Sin are taken all of them out of the World, and the Things that are in the World, namely, the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life. These are the Things that are in the World; from these doth Sin take all its Baits, whereby it enticeth and entangleth our Souls. If the Heart be filled with the Cross of *Christ*, it casts Death and Undesirableness upon them all, it leaves no Beauty, no Pleasure or Comeliness in them. Again, saith he, it crucifieth me to the World; makes my Heart, my Affections, my Desires dead to any of these Things. It roots up corrupt Lusts and Affections, leaves no Principle to make Provision for the Flesh. Labour therefore to fill your Hearts with the Cross of *Christ*. Consider the Sorrows He underwent, the Curse He bore, the Blood He shed, the Cries He put forth, the Love that was in all this to your Souls, and the Mystery of the Grace of GOD therein. Meditate on the Vileness, the Demerit, and Punishment of Sin as represented in the Cross, the Blood, the Death of *Christ*. Is *Christ* crucified for Sin, and shall not our Hearts be crucified with Him unto Sin? Shall we give Enter-
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tainment to that, or hearken to its Dalliances, which wounded, which pierced, which slew our dear LORD *Jesus*? GOD forbid. Fill your Affections with the Cross of *Christ*, that there may be no Room for Sin.

[2.] LOOK to the Vigour of the Affections towards heavenly Things; if they are not constantly attended, excited, directed and warmed, they are apt to decay, and Sin lies in wait to take every Advantage against them. Many Complaints we have in the Scripture of those who lost their first Love, in suffering their Affections to decay. And this should make us jealous over our own Hearts, lest we also should be overtaken with the like. Wherefore be jealous over them, often strictly examine them, and call them to Account; supply unto them due Considerations for their exciting and stirring up to Duty.



CHAP. VII.

The Conception of SIN through its Deceit.

THE *third* Success of the Deceit of Sin in its progressive Work, is the Conception of actual Sin. When it hath drawn the Mind off from its Duty, and entangled the Affections, it proceeds to conceive Sin, in order to the bringing of it forth. Now the Conception of Sin, in order unto its Perpetration, can be nothing but the Consent of the Will: For as without the Consent of the Will Sin cannot be committed, so where the Will hath consented unto it, there is nothing in the Soul

Soul to hinder its actual Accomplishment. God doth indeed by various Ways, frustrate the bringing forth these Conceptions, yet there is nothing in the Soul itself that remains to give Check unto it. This conceiving of Lust or Sin then, is its obtaining the Consent of the Will. And hereby the Soul is deflowered of its Chastity towards God in *Christ*.

THIS Consent of the Will, may be considered two Ways.

(1.) As it is exercised about the Circumstances, Causes, Means and Inducements to Sin.

(2.) As it Respects this or that actual Sin.

IN the first Sense, there is a virtual Consent of the Will unto Sin in every Inadvertency to the Prevention of it, in every Neglect of Duty that makes Way for it, in every Harkning to any Temptation leading towards it. But this is not that which we now speak of. But in particular the Consent of the Will unto this or that actual Sin, so far as that either Sin is committed, or is prevented by other Means. And herein consists the conceiving of Sin.

THESE Things being supposed, that which in the next Place we are to consider, is the Way that the Deceit of Sin proceedeth; to procure the Consent of the Will, and so to conceive actual Sin in the Soul. To this Purpose observe,

[1.] THAT the Will is a rational Appetite; rational as guided by the Mind; and an Appetite as excited by the Affections; and so in its Operation or Actings, is influenced by both.

[2.] IT chuseth nothing, consents to nothing but as it hath an *Appearance of Good*, some present Good : So that,

[3.] WE may see hence the Reason why the Conception of Sin is here placed as a Consequent of the Mind's being drawn away, and the Affections being entangled. Both these have an Influence into the Consent of the Will, and the Conception of this or that actual Sin. Our Way therefore here is made plain. We have seen how the Mind is drawn away by the Deceit of Sin, and how the Affections are entangled, that which remains is but the proper Effect of these Things; for the Discovery whereof we must instance in some of the corrupt and fallacious Reasonings, and then shew their Prevalency on the Will.

I.) THE Will is imposed upon by that corrupt Reasoning, that Grace is exalted in Pardon; and that Mercy is provided for Sinners. This first deceives the Mind, and that opens the Way to the Will's Consent, by removing a Sight of Evil.

Now the Mind being entangled with this Deceit, drawn off from its Watch by it, diverted from the true Ends of the Gospel, doth several Ways impose upon the Will to obtain its Consent.

(1. BY a sudden Surprisal in Case of Temptation. Temptation is the Representation of a Thing as a present Good, which is a real Evil. Now when a Temptation armed with Opportunity, befalls the Soul, the Principle of Grace in the Will riseth up with a Rejection of it. But on a sudden the Mind being deceived by Sin, breaks in upon the Will, with a fallacious Reasoning from Gospel-Grace, and Mercy, which first staggers, then abates the Will's

Will's Opposition, and then causeth it to cast the Scale by its Consent of the Side of Temptation, presenting Evil as a present Good; and Sin in the Sight of GOD is conceived. Thus is the Seed of GOD sacrificed to *Moloch*, and the Weapons of *Christ* abused to the Service of the Devil.

(2. IT doth it insensibly. It insinuates the Poison of this corrupt Reasoning by little and little, until it hath greatly prevailed. And as the whole Effect of the Doctrine of the Gospel in Holiness, consists in the Soul's being cast into the Frame and Mould of it, *Rom. vi. 17.* so the Whole of Apostacy from the Gospel, is principally the Casting the Soul into the Mould of this false Reasoning, that Sin may be indulged upon Account of Grace and Pardon. Hereby is the Soul gratified in Sloth and Negligence, and taken off from its Care, as to particular Duties and particular Sins. It works the Soul insensibly off from the Mystery of the Law of Grace, to look for Salvation as if we had never performed any Duty, with a Resting on sovereign Mercy through the Blood of *Christ*, and to attend to Duties with all Diligence as if we looked for no Mercy; that is with no less Care, though with more Liberty and Freedom. This the Decitfulness of Sin endeavour-eth by all Means to Work the Soul from, and thereby debaucheth the Will when its Consent is required to particular Sins.

2.) THE deceived Mind imposeth on the Will to obtain its Consent to Sin, by proposing to it the Advantages that may arise thereby. It renders that which is absolutely Evil, a present appearing Good. Pleas for Obedience are laid out of the Way, and only the Pleasures of Sin taken under Consideration. So saith *Ahab*, 1 Kings xxi. *Naboth's Vineyard is near my House, and I may make it a Garden of Herbs,*
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therefore I must have it. These Considerations of a deceived Mind imposed on his Will; until it made him obstinate in the Pursuit of his Covetousness through Perjury and Murther. Thus is the Guilt and Tendency of Sin hid under the Covert of Pleasures, and so is conceived in the Soul.

THE Affections being entangled, greatly further the Conception of Sin by the Consent of the Will; and they do it two Ways.

(1. BY some hasty Impulse and Surprisal, being themselves stirred up, and drawn forth by some violent Provocation, or Temptation, they put the whole Soul as it were into a Combustion, and draw the Will to consent unto what they are entangled with. So was the Case of *David* in the Matter of *Nabal*. A violent Provocation stirs him up to Wrath and Revenge, 1 *Sam.* xxv. 13. He resolves upon it, to destroy an whole Family, the Innocent with the Guilty, *ver.* 33, 34. Self-Revenge and Murther, were for the Season conceived, consented unto, until GOD graciously took him off. Let that Soul which would take Heed of conceiving Sin, take Heed of entangled Affections. For Sin may be suddenly conceived, the prevalent Consent of the Will may be suddenly obtained, which gives the Soul a fixed Guilt, tho' the Sin itself be never actually brought forth.

(2. ENTICED Affections procure the Consent of the Will by frequent Sollicitations, whereby they get Ground insensibly upon it, and enthrone themselves. Take an Instance in the Sons of *Jacob*, *Gen.* xxxvii. 4. They hate their Brother, because their Father loved him. Their Affections being enticed, many new Occasions fall out to entangle them farther. This lay rankling in their Hearts, and never ceased

ceased soliciting their Wills, until they resolved upon his Death. The Unlawfulness, the Unnaturalness of the Action, the Grief of their aged Father, the Guilt of their own Souls, are all laid aside; that Hatred and Envy that they had conceived against him ceased not until they had got the Consent of their Wills to his Ruin.



C H A P. VIII.

Several Ways whereby the bringing forth of Conceived SIN is obstructed.

BEFORE we proceed to the remaining Evidences of the Power of Sin, we shall take Occasion to divert unto one Consideration that offers itself from that Scripture, which was made the Foundation of our Discourse of the Deceitfulness of Sin; namely *James i. 14.* The Apostle tells us that *Lust conceiving brings forth Sin*; seeming to intimate, that look what Sin is conceived, that also is brought forth. And yet there is a World of Sin conceived, that is never brought forth. Our present Business then shall be to enquire whence that comes to pass. I answer

1. THAT this is not so, is no Thanks to Sin. What it conceives, it would bring forth; and that it doth not, is for the most Part but a small Abatement of its Guilt.

2. THERE are two Things that are necessary in the Creature that hath conceived Sin, for the bringing

ing of it forth. *First*, Power. *Secondly*, Continuance in the Will of Sinning, until it be committed. Where these two are, actual Sin will unavoidably ensue. It is evident therefore, that that which hinders conceived Sin from being brought forth, must effect either the Power or the Will of the Sinner. This must be from GOD. And he hath two Ways of doing it.

(1.) BY his Providence, whereby he obstructs the Power of Sinning.

(2.) BY his Grace, whereby he changes the Will.

(1.) WHEN Sin is conceived, the LORD obstructs its Production by his Providence in taking away, that Power which is necessary for its bringing forth. As

[1.] LIFE is the Foundation of all Power. Now he frequently obviates the Power of exerting Sin, by cutting short the Lives of them that have conceived it. Thus he dealt with the Army of *Senacherib*. GOD daily thus cuts off Persons, who had conceived much Mischief in their Hearts, and prevents the Execution of it, *Blood thirsty and deceitful Men do not live out half their Days*.

[2.] GOD providentially hinders the bringing forth of conceived Sin, by taking away the Power of them that had conceived it; so that though their Lives continue, they shall not have that Power, without which it is impossible for them to execute what they had intended. Hereof also we have sundry Instances. Thus was the Case with the Builders of *Babel*, Gen. xi. His dealing with *Jeroboam*, 1 Kings xiii. 4. was of the same Nature. He stretched out his Hand to lay hold of the Prophet,

and it withered and became useless. And this is an eminent Way of the effectual Acting of GOD's Providence in the World, for the Stopping of that Indundation of Sin, which else would overflow all the Earth. He cuts Men short of their mortal Power, whereby they should effect it. Many a Wretch that hath conceived Mischief against the Church of GOD, hath, by this Means, been divested of his Power, whereby he thought to accomplish it. Some have their Bodies smitten with Diseases, that they can no more serve their Lusts, nor accompany them in the perpetrating of Folly. Some are deprived of the Instruments whereby they would work. There have been for many Days, Sin and Mischief enough conceived, to root out the Generation from the Face of the Earth, had Men Strength and Ability to their Will, did not GOD cut off their Power, and the Days of their Prevalency. GOD meets with them, brings them down, that they shall not be able to accomplish their Design. And this Way of GOD's preventing Sin, seems to be at least ordinarily, peculiar to the Men of the World; GOD deals thus with them every Day, and leaves them to pine away in their Sins.

It may be also in some Cases, under some violent Temptations, or in Mistakes, GOD may thus obviate the Accomplishment of conceived Sin in Believers. And there seems to be an Instance of it in his Dealing with *Jehosaphat*, who had designed against the Mind of GOD to joyn in Affinity with *Ahab*, and to send his Ships with him to *Tarsish*; but GOD breaks his Ships by a Wind, that he could not accomplish what he had designed.

(1.) GOD providentially hinders the bringing forth of conceived Sin, by opposing an external hindring Power unto Sinners. He leaves them their
Lives,

Lives, and leaves them Power, only He raiseth up an opposite Power to restrain them. An Instance hereof we have, 1 *Sam.* xiv. 45. *Saul* had sworn that *Jonathan* should be put to Death, and as far as appears, went on resolutely to have slain him; God stirs up the Spirit of the People, they oppose themselves to the Wrath and Fury of *Saul*, and *Jonathan* is delivered. And to this Head are to be referred all the Assistances which God stirred up for the Deliverance of his People against the Fury of Persecutors.

(2.) God obviates the Accomplishment of conceived Sin, by removing the Objects on whom the Sin conceived was to be committed, *Acts* xii. 11. yields us a signal Instance of this: When the Day was coming wherein *Herod* thought to have slain *Peter*, God sends and takes him away. So also was our Saviour Himself taken away from the murderous Rage of the *Jews* before his Hour was come, *John* viii. 59. — x. 39. Both primitive and later Times are full of Stories to this Purpose: Prison Doors have been opened, and poor Creatures appointed to dye have been frequently rescued from the Jaws of Death. So Wings were given to the Woman to carry her into the Wilderness, and to disappoint the World in the Execution of their Rage, *Rev.* xii. 14.

(3.) God doth this by some eminent Diversions of the Thoughts of Men who had conceived Sin; *Gen.* xxxvii. 24. The Brethren of *Joseph* cast him into a Pit, with an Intent to famish him there; whilst they were, as it seems, pleasing themselves with what they had done, God orders a Company of Merchants to come by, and diverts their Thoughts with that new Object from the Killing, to the Selling, of their Brother, *ver.* 26, 27. And how far therein they were subservient to the infinitely wise Counsel of God, we know. Thus also when *Saul* was in the

Pursuit of *David*, and was even ready to prevail against him to his Destruction, GOD stirs up the *Philistines* to invade the Land, which both diverted his Thoughts, and drew the Course of his Actings another Way, 1 Sam. xxvii. 27.

AND these are some of the Ways whereby GOD is pleased to hinder the bringing forth of conceived Sin, by opposing his Providence to the Power of the sinning Creature. And we may a little in our Passage take a brief View of the great Advantages of Faith, and the Church of GOD, which may be found in this Matter. As,

[1.] THIS may give us a little insight into the adorable Providence of GOD, by these and the like Ways obstructing the Breaking forth of Sin in the World. It is he who makes those Dams, and shuts up those Flood-Gates of corrupted Nature, that they shall not break forth to overwhelm the Creation. As it was of old, so it is at this Day; *Every Thought and Imagination of the Heart of Man is Evil, and that continually.* That all the Earth is not in all Places filled with Violence, as of old, is meerly from the Hand of GOD obstructing. From hence alone it is, that the Highways, Streets, and Fields, are not all filled with Violence, Blood, Rapine, Uncleanneſs, and every Villany that the Heart of Man can conceive. O the infinite Beauty of divine Wisdom and Providence in the Government of the World: For the Conversation of it asks daily no less Power and Wisdom, than the first Making of it.

[2.] IF we look to our own Concernments, they will, in an especial Manner, enforce us to adore the Providence of GOD, in stopping the Progress of conceived Sin. That we are at Peace in our Houses, at Rest in our Beds, that we have any Quiet in our Enjoyments, is from hence alone. Whose Person

would not be defiled, or destroyed? Whose Habitation would not be ruined? Whose Blood would not be shed, if wicked Men had Power to perpetrate all their conceived Sin? It may be the Ruin of some of us hath been conceived a thousand Times. We are beholden to this Providence for our Lives, Families, Estates, and Liberties, for whatsoever is dear unto us. For may we not say with the *Psalmist*, *Psal. lvii. 4. My Soul is among Lyons, and I lie even among them that are set on Fire, even the Sons of Men, whose Teeth are Spears and Arrows, and their Tongue a sharp Sword.* And how is the Deliverance of Men contrived from such Persons, *Psal. lviii. 6. GOD breaks their Teeth in their Mouths, even the great Teeth of the young Lyons.* He keeps this Fire from burning, or quencheth it when it's ready to break out into a Flame. He breaks their Spears and Arrows, so that sometimes we are not so much as wounded by them: some He cuts off and destroys, some He cuts short in their Power, some He deprives of the Instruments whereby they alone can work, some He prevents of their desired Opportunities, or diverts by other Objects, and oftentimes causeth them to spend them among themselves one upon another. We may say therefore with the *Psalmist*, *Psal. civ. 24. O LORD, how manifold are thy Works, in Wisdom hast thou made them all, the Earth is full of thy Riches;* and with the Prophet, *Hos. xiv. 9. Who is wise, and he shall understand these Things, prudent and he shall know them; all the Ways of the LORD are right, and the Just shall walk in them, but the Transgressors shall fall therein.*

[3.] WE may see hence the great Use of Magistracy in the World, that great Appointment of GOD. Amongst other Things, it is peculiarly subservient to this holy Providence, in obstructing the bringing forth of conceived Sin, namely, by the Terror of Him that bears the Sword, *Rom.*

xiii. 4. *If thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for the Power beareth not the Sword in vain, for he is the Minister of GOD, a Revenger to execute Wrath on them that do Evil.* GOD fixes this on the Hearts of Men, and by the Dread of it closeth the Womb of Sin, that it shall not bring forth. The greatest Mercies and Blessings that in this World we are made Partakers of, next to them of the Gospel, come to us thro' this Channel. And indeed, this is the proper Work of Magistracy, to be subservient to the Providence of GOD in obstructing the bringing forth of Sin. These then are some of the Ways whereby GOD providentially prevents the bringing forth of Sin.

THE Way that yet remains whereby GOD obviates the Production of conceived Sin, is his working on the Will of the Sinners, so making Sin to consume away in the Womb.

THERE are two Ways in general whereby GOD thus prevents the bringing forth of conceived Sin, by working on the Will of the Sinner; and they are, 1.) By restraining Grace. 2.) By renewing Grace.

1.) GOD doth this in the Way of Restraining Grace, by some Arrow of particular Conviction fix'd in the Conscience of the Sinner, in Reference to the particular Sin which he had conceived. This staggers the Mind, as to the Particular intended, causeth the Hands to hang down, and the Weapons of Lust to fall out of them. Hereby conceived Sin proves abortive. How GOD doth this Work, by what immediate Touches, Strokes, Blows, Rebukes of his Spirit; by what Reasonings, Arguments, and Commotions of Mens own Consciences, is not for us thoroughly to find out. It is done in unspeakable Variety, and the Works of GOD are past finding out.

AND this Way in general doth GOD every Day prevent the bringing forth of a World of Sin: He sharpens Arrows of Conviction upon the Spirits of Men, as to the Particular they are engaged in. Their Hearts are not changed as to Sin, but their Minds are altered as to this or that Sin. They break, it may be, the Vessel they had fashion'd, and go to Work upon some other.

2.) GOD prevents the bringing forth of conceived Sin by Saving Grace, and that either,

(1. IN the first Conversion of Sinners. Or,

(2. THE following Supplies of it.

(1. THIS is one Part of the Mystery of his Grace. He meets Men sometimes in their highest Resolutions for Sin, with the highest Efficacy of his Grace. By this He melts down the Lusts of Men, causeth them to wither at the Root, that they shall no more strive to bring forth what they have conceived, but be filled with Shame and Sorrow at their Conception. And we have not a few Examples of it in our own Days. Sundry Persons going to this or that Place to deride the Dispensation of the Word, have been met with in the very Place, and have been cast down at the Foot of GOD. But there is no Need to insist on Instances of this. GOD is pleased to leave no Generation unconvinced of this Truth, if they do but attend to their own Experiences, and the Examples of this Work of his Mercy amongst them. Every Day, one or other, is taken in the Purpose of his Heart to go on in Sin, and is stopt by the Power of converting Grace.

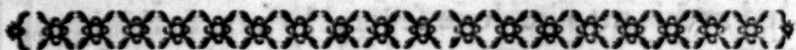
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(2. GOD doth it by the same Grace in the renewed Communications of it, that is, by special assisting Grace. This is the common Way of his dealing with Believers in this Case. That they also through the Deceitfulness of Sin may be carried on to the Conceiving this or that Sin, was before declared. GOD puts a Stop to their Progress, or rather to the Prevalency of Sin in them, by giving them special Assistances. Many a Believer is at the very Brink of some Folly or Iniquity, when GOD puts in by the Efficacy of assisting Grace, and recovers them to an obediential Frame of Heart again. And this Assistance lies under the Promise, 1 Cor. x. 13. *There hath no Temptation taken you, but such as is common to Man, but GOD is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the Temptation also make a Way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.* Temptation shall try us, it is for our Good; many holy Ends doth the LORD compass by it. But when we are tried to the utmost of our Ability, so that one Assault more would over-bear us, a Way of Escape is provided. And as this may be done several Ways, so this is one of the most eminent, namely, by Supplies of Grace, to enable the Soul to bear up, resist, and conquer.

(3. BESIDES these general Ways, there is one yet more special, that at once worketh both upon the Power and Will of the Sinner; and this is the Way of Afflictions; these work by both these Ways, in Reference unto conceived Sin. They work providentially upon the Power of the Creature. When a Man hath conceived a Sin, and is in full Pursuit of it, GOD often sends a Sickness, and abates his Strength, or a Loss cuts him short in his Plenty, and so takes him off from the Pursuit of his Lusts, though it may be his

Heart is not weaned from them. His Power is weaken'd, and he cannot do the Evil he would. In this Sense it belongs to the first Way of God's obviating the Production of Sin. Great Afflictions work not from their own Nature immediately, but from the gracious Purpose of Him that sends them. He insinuates into the Dispensation of them, that of Grace and Power, of Love and Kindness, which shall effectually take off the Heart from Sin, *Psal. cxix. 67. Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I learn'd thy Commandments.* And in this Way, because of the Predominancy of renewing and assisting Grace, they belong to the latter Means of preventing Sin.

AND these are some of the Ways, whereby it pleaseth GOD to put a Stop to the Progress of Sin, both in Believers and Unbelievers, if we would endeavour farther to search out his Ways unto Perfection, yet we must still conclude that it is but a *little Portion which we know of Him.*



CHAP. IX.

The Power of SIN farther demonstrated by the Effects it hath had in the Lives of BELIEVERS.

WE are now to proceed to other Evidences of this sad Truth.

THAT which in the next Place may be fixed upon, is the Demonstration which this Law of Sin

Sin hath in all Ages given of its Power, by the Fruits that it hath brought forth, even in Believers.

Now, these are of two Sorts. 1. The great actual Eruptions of Sin in their Lives. 2. Their habitual Declensions from the Communion with God, which they had obtained; both which are to be laid to the Account of this Law of Sin, and belong to the fourth Head of its Progress.

I. CONSIDER the fearful Eruptions of actual Sins that have been in the Lives of Believers, and we shall find our Position evidenced.

(1.) THEY are most of them in the Lives of Men that were not of the lowest Form, or ordinary Sort of Believers, but of Men that had a peculiar Eminency in them, on the Account of their walking with God in their Generations.

(2.) AND these very Men fell not into their Sins at the Beginning of their Profession, when they had had but a little Experience of the Goodness of God, of the Sweetness and Pleasantness of Obedience, of the Power and Craft of Sin, but after a long Course of Walking with God, and Acquaintance with all these Things.

(3.) As if GOD had permitted their Falls on set Purpose, that we might learn to be wary of this powerful Enemy; they all of them fell out when they had receiv'd great and stupendous Mercies from the Hand of GOD, that ought to have been strong Obligations unto Diligence and Watchfulness in close Obedience. And yet what Prevalency this Law of Sin wrought in them we see. And there is no End of the like Examples;

they are all set up as Buoys to discover unto us the Sands, the Shelves, the Rocks, whereupon they made their Shipwreck. And this is the first Part of this Evidence of the Power of Sin, from its Effects.

2. IT manifests its Power in the habitual Declensions from Zeal and Holiness, from the Condition of Obedience and Communion with God, whereunto they had attained, which are found in many Believers. Promises of Growth and Improvement are many and precious; the Means excellent and effectual; the Benefits great and unspeakable; yet it often falls out, that instead hereof, Decays and Declensions are found upon Believers. We have a notable Instance in most of the Churches that our Saviour awakens to the Consideration of their Condition, in the *Revelations*: We may single out one. Many good Things there were in the Church of *Ephesus*, for which it is greatly commended; but yet it is charged with a Decay and a Declension, a gradual falling off: *Thou hast left thy first Love, remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and do thy first Works*. There was a Decay both as to Faith and Love; and as to Obedience and Works, in Comparison of what they had formerly. But what Need we look back, or search for Instances to confirm the Truth of this Observation? An habitual Declension from first Engagements unto God, from first Attainments of Communion with God, from first Strictness in Duties of Obedience is common among Believers.

Now, all these Declensions proceed from this Root; they are all the Product of Indwelling Sin. For the Proof hereof I shall not need to go further than the general Rule we have already considered, namely, that Lust or Indwelling Sin is
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the Cause of all actual Sin, and all habitual Declensions in Believers.

I SHALL therefore shew, [1.] That this doth evince a great Power in Sin. [2.] The Ways whereby it brings forth this cursed Effect.

[1.] IT appears to be a Work of great Power, from the Provision that is made against it, which it prevails over. There is in the Covenant of Grace plentiful Provision made, not only for the preventing of Declensions and Decays in Believers, but also for their continual Carrying on towards Perfection. As,

1.) THE Word itself, and all the Ordinances of the Gospel, are appointed and given us for this End, *Ephes. iv. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15.* The Dispensation of the Word of the Gospel, and the Ordinances thereof, is designed for our Help, Assistance, and Furtherance, until the whole Work of Faith and Obedience is consummate. It is appointed to perfect and compleat that Faith, Knowledge, and Growth in Grace and Holiness, which is allotted unto us in this World. What if Oppositions and Temptations lie in the Way, *Satan* and his Instruments working with great Subtily? Why, *ver. 14.* these Ordinances were designed for our Deliverance from all their Attempts, that so being preserved in the Use of them, *or speaking the Truth in Love, we may grow up unto Him in all Things who is the Head, even Christ Jesus.*

2.) THERE is that which adds Weight to this Consideration. GOD suffers us not to be unmindful of this Assistance He hath afforded us, but is continually calling upon us to make Use of the Means appointed for attaining the End proposed. He

shews them to us, as the Angel shewed the Water-Spring to *Hagar*. Commands, Exhortations, Promises, Threatenings, are multiply'd to this Purpose. He is continually saying to us, Why will ye die? Why will ye wither and decay? Come to the Pastures provided for you, and your Souls shall live. If we see a Lamb run from the Fold into the Wilderness, we wonder not if it be torn and rent of wild Beasts; but if we see a Sheep leaving its green Pastures and Water-Courses, to abide in dry, barren Heaths, we count it no Marvel, nor enquire farther, if we see him lean, and ready to perish. But if we find Lambs wounded in the Fold, we wonder at the Boldness of the Beasts of Prey, that durst set upon them there. If we see Sheep pining in full Pastures, we judge them to be diseased and unsound. It is indeed no Marvel that poor Creatures, who forsake their own Mercies, and run away from the Pasture of *Christ* in his Ordinances, are rent and torn with divers Lusts, and pine away with Hunger and Famine. But to see Men living under, and enjoying all the Means of spiritual Thriving, yet to decay daily, to pine and wither, this argues some secret, powerful Distemper, which hinders the Efficacy of the Means they enjoy. This is Indwelling Sin. So wonderfully powerful, so effectually poisonous it is, that it can bring Leanness on the Souls of Men in the Midst of all precious Means of Growth and Flourishing. It may well make us tremble to see Men living in the Use of the Means of the Gospel, Preaching, Praying, Administration of Sacraments, and yet grow colder every Day than other in Zeal for God, more selfish and worldly, even habitually to decline as to the Degrees of Holiness, which they had attained unto.

3.) TOGETHER with the outward Means of spiritual Growth, there are also Supplies of Grace continually afforded the Saints from their Head, *Christ Jesus*. He comes not only that his Sheep may have Life, but that *they may have it more abundantly*, that is, in a plentiful Manner, so as that they may flourish, be fat and fruitful. His Treasures of Grace are unsearchable, his Stores inexhaustible. His Heart bounteous and large, his Hand open and liberal; so that there is no Doubt, but that he communicates Supplies of Grace for their Increase in Holiness abundantly unto all his Saints. Whence then is it, that they do not all thrive accordingly? As you may see it often in a natural Body, so it is here. Though the Seat and Rise of the Blood and Spirits in the Head and Heart be excellently good and sound, yet there may be a withering Member in the Body; somewhat intercepts the Influences of Life unto it: So that tho' the Heart and Head perform their Office in giving Supplies no less to that than to any other Member, yet all the Effect produced is merely to keep it from utter Perishing; it grows weak, and decays every Day. The Withering and Decaying of any Member in *Christ's* mystical Body, is not for the Want of his Communication of Grace, but from the powerful Interception that is made of the Efficacy of it, by the Interposition and Opposition of Indwelling Sin. Hence it is, a great Deal of Grace but will keep the Soul alive, and not give it any Eminency in Fruitfulness. And this, if any Thing, is an Evidence of the Efficacy of Indwelling Sin, that it is able to give such a Check to the mighty and effectual Power of Grace; so that notwithstanding the continual Supplies we receive from our Head, yet many Believers decline and decay, and that habitually, as to what they had attained to;

to; their last Ways not answering their first. This makes the Vineyard in the very fruitful Hill to bring forth so many wild Grapes. This makes so many Trees barren in fertile Fields.

4.) BESIDES continual Supplies of Grace communicated unto Believers, which keeps them; there is moreover a Readiness in the LORD *Jesus Christ* to yield peculiar Succour according as their Occasion shall require. And this is exceedingly to the Advantage of the Saints, for their Preservation and Growth in Grace. But notwithstanding all these, such is the Power of Indwelling Sin, so great is the Deceitfulness and Restlessness, that many of them for whose Growth all this Provision is made, go back and decline, even as to their Course of Walking with God.



C H A P. X.

Decays in Degrees of Grace caused by Indwelling Sin. The Ways of its Prevalency.

THE Ways whereby Indwelling Sin prevail-eth on Believers unto habitual Declensions and Decays, is that now which comes under Consideration.

1. UPON the first Conversion of Sinners to God, they have usually many fresh Springs breaking forth in their Souls, and refreshing Showers coming upon them, which bear them up to an high Rate of Faith, Love,

Love, Holiness, Fruitfulness and Obedience. As upon a Land-flood, when many lesser Streams run into a River, it swells over its Bounds, and rolls on with a more than ordinary Fulness. Now if these Springs be not kept open, if they prevail not for the Continuance of these Showers, they must needs decay and go backwards. We shall Name one or two of them.

(1.) **THEY** have a fresh, vigorous Sense of pardoning Mercy. According as this is in the Soul, so will its Love and Delight in GOD, so will its Obedience be. Sinners at their first Conversion are very sensible of great Forgiveness: *Of whom I am Chief*, lies next their Heart. This greatly subdues their Hearts to GOD, and quickens them to all Obedience; even that such poor cursed Sinners as they were, should so freely be delivered and pardoned. The Love of GOD and of *Christ* in their Forgiveness, highly conquers and constrains them to live unto GOD.

(2.) **THE** fresh Taste they have of spiritual Things, keeps up such a Relish of them in their Souls, that worldly Contentments whereby Men are drawn off from close walking with GOD, are rendered Tasteless and Undesirable to them. Having tasted of the Wine of the Gospel they desire no other, for they say, *This is best*. Now whilst these and the like Springs are kept open in the Souls of converted Sinners, they constrain them to a vigorous active Holiness. They can never do enough for GOD; so that often their Zeal suffers them not to escape without some Blots on their Prudence.

THIS then is one Way, whereby indwelling Sin prepares Men for Decays in Grace and Obedience: It endeavours to stop or taint these Springs. And there

there are several Ways whereby it bringeth this to pass.

[1.] *IT* Works by Sloth and Negligence. It prevails in the Soul to a Neglect of stirring up continual Thoughts of the Things that so powerfully Influence it unto strict and fruitful Obedience. If Care be not taken, if Diligence and Watchfulness be not used, and all Means observed, that are appointed of *GOD*, to keep a quick and living Sense of them upon the Soul, they will dry up and decay, and consequently that Obedience that should spring from them, will do so also. *Isaac* digged Wells, but the *Philistines* stopt them, and his Flocks had no Benefits by them. Let the Heart never so little disuse itself to affecting Thoughts of the Love of *GOD*, the Cross of *Christ*, the Greatness and Excellency of Gospel Mercy, the Beauties of Holiness, they will quickly be as much estranged to a Man, as He can be to them. And so much as a Man loseth of Faith towards these Things, so much will they lose of Power towards him. They can do little or nothing upon him, because of his Unbelief, which formerly were so exceedingly effectual towards him. Indwelling Sin, prevailing by spiritual Sloth upon the Souls of Men unto an Inadvertency of the Motions of *GOD*'s Spirit in their former Apprehensions of divine Love, and a Negligence of stirring up continual Thoughts of Faith about it, a Decay grows insensibly upon the whole Soul. Thus *GOD* oft complains that his People had forgotten Him, that is, grew unmindful of his Love and Grace, which was the Beginning of their Apostacy.

[2.] *BY* unframing the Soul, so that it shall have formal, weary, powerless Thoughts of those Things, which should prevail with it unto Diligence in thankful Obedience. The Apostle cau-

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tions us, that in Dealing with GOD, we should use Reverence and godly Fear, because of his Purity, Holiness, and Majesty, *Heb. xii. 28, 29.* And this is that which the LORD Himself spake in the Destruction of *Nadab and Abihu, I will be sanctified in them that come to Me, Levit. x. 3.* He will be dealt with in an awful, holy, reverent Manner. So are we to deal with all the Things of GOD, whereby we have Communion with Him. The Soul is to have a great Reverence of GOD in them. When Men begin to take them into slight and common Thoughts, not improving them to the utmost, for the Ends whereto they are appointed; they lose all their Beauty, and Glory. When we have any Thing to do, wherein Faith or Love towards GOD is to be exercised, we must do it with all our Hearts, with all our Minds, Strength, and Souls, not slightly and perfunctorily, which GOD abhors. He doth not only require that we bear his Love and Grace in Remembrance, but that, as much as in us lyeth, we do it according to the Worth and Excellency of them. Whilst we consider Gospel Truths, the uttermost Endeavour of the Soul ought to be, that we may be changed into the same Likeness; that is, that they may have their full Power and Effect upon us. Now this is the Way of Sinners, in their first Engagements to GOD. They never think of pardoning Mercy, but they labour to affect their whole Souls with it, and stir up themselves to suitable Affections and Returns of constant Obedience. They think not of the Excellency of *Christ*, and spiritual Things, now newly discovered unto them, but they press with all their Might after a farther, a fuller Enjoyment of them. This keeps them Humble and Holy, this makes them Thankful and Fruitful. But now if the utmost Diligence and Carefulness be not used to improve and grow in this Wisdom, to keep up this Frame, Indwelling Sin

Sin will insensibly bring them to content themselves with slight Thoughts of these Things. And as Men decay herein, so they will assuredly Decay in the Power of Holiness, and close Walking with God. The Springs being stopped or tainted, the Streams will not run so swiftly, at least, not so sweetly as formerly. Some by this Means under an uninterrupted Profession, insensibly wither into Nothing. They talk of Religion and spiritual Things as much as ever they did, and perform Duties with as much Constancy as ever, but yet have poor starving Souls, as to Communion with God.

[3.] **INDWELLING** Sin often prevails to the Stopping of these Springs of Gospel-obedience, by false and foolish Opinions, corrupting the Simplicity of the Gospel; false Opinions are the Works of the Flesh: From the Vanity and Darkness of the Minds of Men, with a Mixture, more or less, of corrupt Affections, do they mostly proceed. The Apostle was jealous over his *Corinthians* in this Matter; he was afraid lest their Minds should be corrupted from the Simplicity that is in *Christ*, *2 Cor. II. 2, 3.* which he knew would be attended by a Decay and Declension in Faith, Love, and Obedience; and thus Matters often fall out: We have seen some, who after they have received a sweet Taste of the Love of God in *Christ*, of the Excellency of pardoning Mercy, and have walked humbly with God for many Years, have by the Corruption of their Minds from the Simplicity that is in *Christ*, by false and foolish Opinions despised all their own Experiences, and rejected all the Efficacy of Truth, as to the Furtherance of their Obedience.

AND this is one Way whereby Indwelling Sin produceth this pernicious Effect, of drawing Men off

off from the Power, Purity, and Fruitfulness attending their first Conversion, bringing them into habitual Declension, at least, as to Degrees of Holiness. There is not any Thing we ought to be more Watchful against, if we intend effectually to deal with this powerful and subtile Enemy. It is no small Part of the Wisdom of Faith, to observe whether Gospel Truths continue to have the same Efficacy upon the Soul, as formerly they have had; and whether an Endeavour be maintained to improve them continually as at the First. A Commandment that is always practiced, is always new. And he that really improves Gospel Truths, tho' he hears them a thousand Times, they will be always new and fresh unto him, because they put him on Newness of Practice: When to another that grows common under them, they are burthensome and common to him; and he even loaths the Manna that he is accustomed to.

I. INDWELLING Sin doth this, by taking Men off from their Watch against the Returns of *Satan*. When our LORD *Jesus Christ* comes first to take Possession of any Soul, He binds that strong Man, and spoils his Goods; He deprives him of all his Power, Dominion and Interest. *Satan* being thus dispossessed, leaves the Soul, as finding it mortified to its Baits. So he left our Saviour upon his first fruitless Attempts: But it is said, *he left Him only for a Season*, Luke iv. 13. He intended to return again, as he should see his Advantage. So is it with Believers also; being cast out, he leaves them for a Season, at least, comparatively he doth so. Freed from his Assaults and perplexing Temptations, they proceed vigorously in the Course of their Obedience; But, *Satan* returns again, and if the Soul stands not continually upon his Guard against him, he will quickly get such Advantages, as will

put a notable Interruption upon his Fruitfulness and Obedience. Hence some, after they have spent some Time, it may be some Years, in chearful, exemplary Walking with God, have upon *Satan's* Return, consumed all their latter Days in Wrestling with perplexing Temptations. Now this also is from Indwelling Sin: I mean, the Success is so, which *Satan* doth obtain in his Undertaking. This encourageth him, maketh Way for his Return, and gives Entrance to his Temptations. You know how it is with them, out of whom he is cast only by Conviction; after he hath wandered and waited a While, he saith, *he will return to his House*. And what is the Issue? Lusts have prevailed over the Man's Convictions, and made his Soul fit to entertain returning Devils. It is so as to the Measure of Prevalency, that *Satan* obtains against Believers. Now the Means whereby Indwelling Sin doth give Advantage to *Satan* for his Return, are all those which dispose them towards a Declension. *Satan* is a diligent, watchful, and crafty Adversary, he will neglect no Opportunity. Wherein then soever our spiritual Strength is impaired by Sin, or which Way soever our Lusts press, *Satan* falls in with that Weakness, and presseth towards that Ruin: So that all the Actings of Sin are subservient to this End of *Satan*.

I SHALL therefore only at present mention one or two, that seem principally to invite *Satan* to attempt a Return.

(1.) IT entangleth the Soul in the Things of the World, all which are so many Purveyors for *Satan*. When *Pharaoh* had let the People go, he heard after a While that they were entangled in the Wilderness, and supposeth that he shall therefore now overtake them, and destroy them: This stirs him

up to pursue after them. *Satan* finding those whom he hath been cast out from, entangled in the Things of the World, by which he is sure to find an easy Access, is encouraged to attempt them afresh; and often by this Advantage he gets so in upon the Souls of Men, that they are never free of him more whilst they live. And as Men's Diversions increase from the World, so do their Intanglements from *Satan*: when they have more to do in the World than they can well manage, they shall have more to do from *Satan* than they can well withstand.

(2.) IT produceth this Effect by making the Soul negligent, and taking it off from its Watch. We have before shewed at large, that this is one main Part of the effectual Deceitfulness of Indwelling Sin. Now, there is not any Thing in Reference where Diligence and Watchfulness is more strictly enjoined, than the returning Assaults of *Satan*, 1 Pet. v. 8. *Be sober, be vigilant; and why so? Because of your Adversary the Devil.* Unless you are exceeding Watchful, at one Time or another he will surprise you. And all the Injunctions of our blessed Saviour, to Watch, are still with Reference to him, and his Temptations. Now when the Soul is made Careless and Inadvertent, forgetting what an Enemy it hath to deal with, or is lifted up with the Successes it hath newly obtained, then is *Satan's* Time to attempt a Re-entrance; which if he cannot obtain, yet, he makes their Lives uncomfortable to themselves, and unfruitful to others, in weakening their Root, and withering their Fruit, through his poisoning Temptations.

(3.) INDWELLING Sin takes Advantage to put forth its Efficacy and Deceit, to withdraw Men from their primitive Zeal and Holiness, from their first Faith, Love, and Works, by the evil Exam-
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ples of Professors amongst whom they live. When Men first engage in the Ways of God, they have a reverent Esteem of those whom they believe to have been made Partakers of that Mercy before themselves. But after a While, they find many of them walking in many Things unevenly, and not unlike the Men of the World. Here Sin is not wanting to its Advantage. Insensibly it prevails with Men to a Compliance with them. This Way doth well enough with others, why may it not do so with us also? Such is the inward Thought of many, that works effectually in them. And so through the Craft of Sin, the Generation of Professors corrupt one another. As a Stream arising from a clear Spring, whilst it runs in its own Channel, and keeps its Water unmixed, preserves its Purity, but when it falls in with other Streams that are foul, it becomes muddy and discoloured also. So it is in this Case. Believers come forth from the Spring of the new Birth with Purity; thus for a While they keep in the Course of their private Walking with God; but when they fall into Society with others, whose Profession flows the same Way, yet are muddied and fullied with Sin and the World, they are often corrupted with them, and by them, and so decline from their first Purity, Faith, and Holiness.

Now lest this may have been the Case of any who shall read this, I shall add some few Cautions to preserve Men from this Infection.

I.) IN the Body of Professors there is a great Number of Hypocrites. Though we cannot say of this, or that Man, that he is so, yet, that some there are, is most certain. Our Saviour hath told us, that it will be so to the End of the World. Let Men take Heed how they give themselves up to a

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Conformity to the Professors they meet with, lest instead of Saints and the best of Men, they sometimes propose for their Example Hypocrites, which are the worst; and when they think they are like them who bear the Image of God, they conform themselves to those who bear the Image of *Satan*.

2.) You know not what may be the present Temptations of those whose Ways you observe. It may be they are under some peculiar Desertion, and so are withering for a Season. It may be they are intangled with some special Corruptions, which is their Burthen, that you know not of; and for any voluntarily to fall into such a Frame, as others are cast into by the Power of their Temptations; or to think that will suffice in them, which they see to suffice in others, whose Distempers they know not, is Folly and Presumption. He that knows such or such a Person to be a living Man, and of an healthy Constitution, if he see him go crawling up and down about his Affairs, feeble and weak, sometimes falling, sometimes standing, and making small Progress in any Thing, will he think it sufficient for himself to do so also? Will he not enquire whether the Person he sees, have not lately fallen into some Distemper or Sickness, that hath weakened him, and brought him into that Condition? Assuredly he will. Take Heed, *Christians*, many of the Professors with whom ye converse are sick and wounded; the Wounds of some of them stink, and are corrupt because of their Folly. If you have any spiritual Health, do not think their weak and uneven Walking will be accepted at your Hands; much less think it will be well for you to become sick and to be wounded also.

(3.) SIN doth this Work, by cherishing some secret particular Lust in the Heart. This the Soul

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contends against faintly. Now where it is thus with
 a Soul, an habitual Declension as to Holiness will
 assuredly ensue. But where Indwelling Sin hath ir-
 ritated, and given Strength to a special Lust, it
 proves a principal Means of a general Declension.
 For as Weakness in any vital Part, will make the
 whole Body consumptive, so will the Weakness in
 any one Grace, make the Soul. It every Way
 weakens spiritual Strength. It weakens Confidence
 in God, in Faith and Prayer. The Knees will be
 feeble, and the Hands will hang down in Dealing
 with God, where an unmortified Lust lies in the
 Heart. It will take such Hold upon the Soul, that
 it shall not be able *to look up*, Psal. xl. 12. It darkens
 the Mind by innumerable foolish Imaginations,
 which it stirs up to make Provision for itself. It
 galls the Conscience with those Spots and Stains,
 which it brings upon the Soul. By these, and the
 like Means, it becomes to the Soul like a Moth in
 a Garment, to eat up and devour the strongest
 Threads of it, so that though the whole hang loose
 together, it is easily torn in Pieces. Though the
 Soul with whom it is thus, do for a Season keep up a
 fair Profession, yet his Strength is secretly devoured,
 and every Temptation tears and rents his Conscience
 at Pleasure. It becomes with such Men as it is with
 some who have for many Years been of a sound
 strong athletick Constitution: Some secret heetical
 Distemper seizeth on them. For a Season they take
 no Notice of it; or if they do, they think they
 shall do well enough with it, and easily shake it off,
 when they have a little Leisure to attend unto it:
 But for the present they think, as *Sampson* with his
 Locks cut, they will do as at other Times. Some-
 times it may be, that they complain that they are
 not well, they know not what aileth them, and it
 may be rise violently in an Opposition to their Dis-
 temper; but, after a While struggling in vain, the
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Vigour of their Spirits and Strength failing them, they are forced to yield. It is so with Men brought into spiritual Decays by any secret perplexing Corruption. It may be they have had a vigorous Principle of Obedience and Holiness: Indwelling Sin watching its Opportunities, by some Temptation or other, hath kindled some particular Lust. For a While they take little Notice of it. Sometimes they complain, but think they will do as in former Times, until being insensibly weakned in their spiritual Strength, they have Work enough to do in keeping alive what remains and is ready to die, *Hos. v. 13.*

(4.) It works by Negligence of private Communion with GOD in Prayer and Meditation. I have shewed before, how Indwelling Sin puts forth its Deceitfulness in diverting the Soul from Watchfulness to these Duties. Here if it prevails, it will not fail to induce an habitual Declension in the whole Course of Obedience. All Neglect of private Duties is principled by a Weariness of GOD as he complaineth, *Isa. xliii. 22. Thou hast not called upon Me, thou hast been weary of me.* Neglect of Invocation proceeds from Weariness. And where there is Weariness, there will be withdrawing from that whereof we are weary. Now GOD alone being the Fountain and Spring of spiritual Life, if there be a Weariness of Him, and withdrawing from Him, it is impossible but that there will a Decay in the Life ensue. Indeed what Men are in these Duties, I mean as to Faith and Love in them, that they are and no more. Here lyes the Root of their Obedience, and if this fail, all Fruit will quickly fail. You may sometimes see a Tree flourishing with Leaves and Fruit goodly and pleasant. After a While the Leaves begin to decay, the Fruit to wither, the
Whole

Whole to droop. Search, and you shall find the Root, whereby it should draw in Moisture from the Earth to supply the Body and Branches with Sap and Juice for Growth and Fruit, hath received a Wound, is some Way perished, and doth not perform its Duty; so that though the Branches are flourishing a While with what they had received, their Sustenance being intercepted, they must decay. So it is here. These Duties of private Communion with GOD, are the Means of receiving Supplies of Strength from Him. Whilst they do so, the Conversation and Course of Obedience flourisheth and is fruitful. But if there be a Wound in that which should first take in the spiritual Moisture, that should be communicated unto the Whole, the Rest may for a Season maintain their Appearance, but after a While will wither away.

(5.) GROWING in Notions of Truth without answerable Practice, is another Thing that Indwelling Sin makes Use of to bring Believers under a Decay. The Apostle tells us, that *Knowledge puffeth up*, 1 Cor. viii. 1. If it be alone, not improved in Practice, it swells Merit beyond a due Proportion. Like a Man that hath a Dropsy, we are not to expect that he hath Strength to his Bigness. Like Trees that are continually running up an Head, which keeps them from bearing Fruit. When once Men have attained to this, that they can receive evangelical Truths in a more glorious Light, or more clear Discovery than formerly, or new Manifestations of Truth which they knew not before, and please themselves in so doing, without diligent Endeavours to have the Power of those Truths upon their Hearts, and their Souls made conformable to them, they generally learn to dispose of all Truths formerly known, which were some-

sometimes inlaid in their Hearts with more Efficacy and Power. This hath proved, if not the Ruin, yet the great Impairing of many in these Days of Light. By this Means from humble close Walking, many have withered into an empty, barren, *talking* Profession. All Things almost have in a short Season become alike unto them: Have they been true or false, so they might be debating of them, all is well. This is Food for Sin, it hatcheth, increaseth it, and is increased by it. A notable Way it is for the Vanity that is in the Mind, to exert itself without a Rebuke from Conscience. Whilst Men are talking, and writing, and studying about Religion, and hearing Preaching, it may be, with great Delight. Conscience, unless thoroughly awake and circumspect, and furnished with spiritual Wisdom, will be very well pacified, and enter no Rebuke or Pleas against the Way that the Soul is in. But yet all this may be nothing but the Acting of that natural Vanity, which lies in the Mind, and is a principal Part of the Sin we treat of. And generally this is so, when Men content themselves, as was said, with the Notions of Truth, without labouring after an Experience of the Power of them in their Hearts, and the Bringing forth the Fruit of them in their Lives, on which a Decay must needs ensue.

(6.) GROWTH in carnal Wisdom is another Help to Sin in producing this sad Effect. *Thy Wisdom and thy Knowledge*, saith the Prophet, *hath perverted thee*, Isa. xlvii. 10. So much as carnal Wisdom increaseth, so much Faith decays. The proper Work of it is to teach a Man to trust in himself, of Faith to trust wholly in another. So it labours to destroy the whole Work of Faith, by causing the Soul to return into a deceiving Fulness of his own. We have
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woful Examples of the Prevalency of this Principle of Declension. How many a poor, humble, broken hearted Creature, who followed after GOD in Simplicity and Integrity of Spirit, have we seen, thro' the Observation of the Ways and Walkings of others, and closing with the Temptations to Craft and Subtily, which Opportunities in the World have administred unto them, come to be dipt in a worldly carnal Frame, and utterly to wither in their Profession? Many are so sullied hereby, that they are not to be known to be the Men they were.

(7.) SOME great Sin lying long in the Heart unrepented of, or not repented of as it ought, furthers Indwelling Sin in this Work. A great Sin will certainly give a great Turn to the Life of a Professor. If it be well cured in the Blood of *Christ*, with that Humiliation which the Gospel requires; it often proves a Means of more Watchfulness, Fruitfulness, Humility, and Content. If it be neglected, it certainly hardens the Heart, weakens spiritual Strength, enfeebles the Soul, discouraging it unto all Communion with GOD, and is a notable Principle of a general Decay. So *David* complains, *Psal. xxxviii. 5. My Wounds stink, and are corrupt, because of my Foolishness.* His present Distemper was not so much from his Sin, as his Folly, not so much from the Wounds he had received, as from his Neglect to make a timely Application for their Cure. It is like a broken Bone, which being well set, leaves the Place stronger than before; if otherwise, makes the Man a Cripple all his Days.

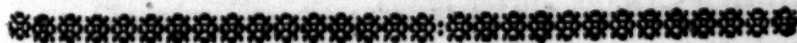
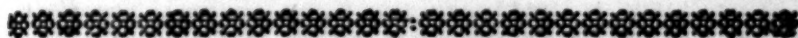
It may now be expected, that we should add the especial Uses of this Discovery that hath been made of the Power and Success of this great Adversary of our Souls. But that Humility, Self-Abasement,
Watch-

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Watchfulness, Diligence, and Application unto the LORD *Christ* for Relief, which will become those who find in themselves by Experience, the Power of this Law of Sin, have been occasionally mentioned and inculcated through the whole preceding Discourse: For what concerns the actual Mortification of it, I shall only recommend unto the Reader another small Treatise written long since unto that Purpose.

To the only wise GOD our Saviour be Glory and Majesty, Dominion and Power, both now and ever. Amen.

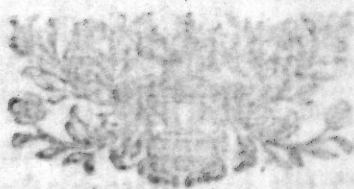
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